

A YOUNG MAN'S RELIGION
AND HIS FATHER'S FAITH

N. MCGEE WATERS

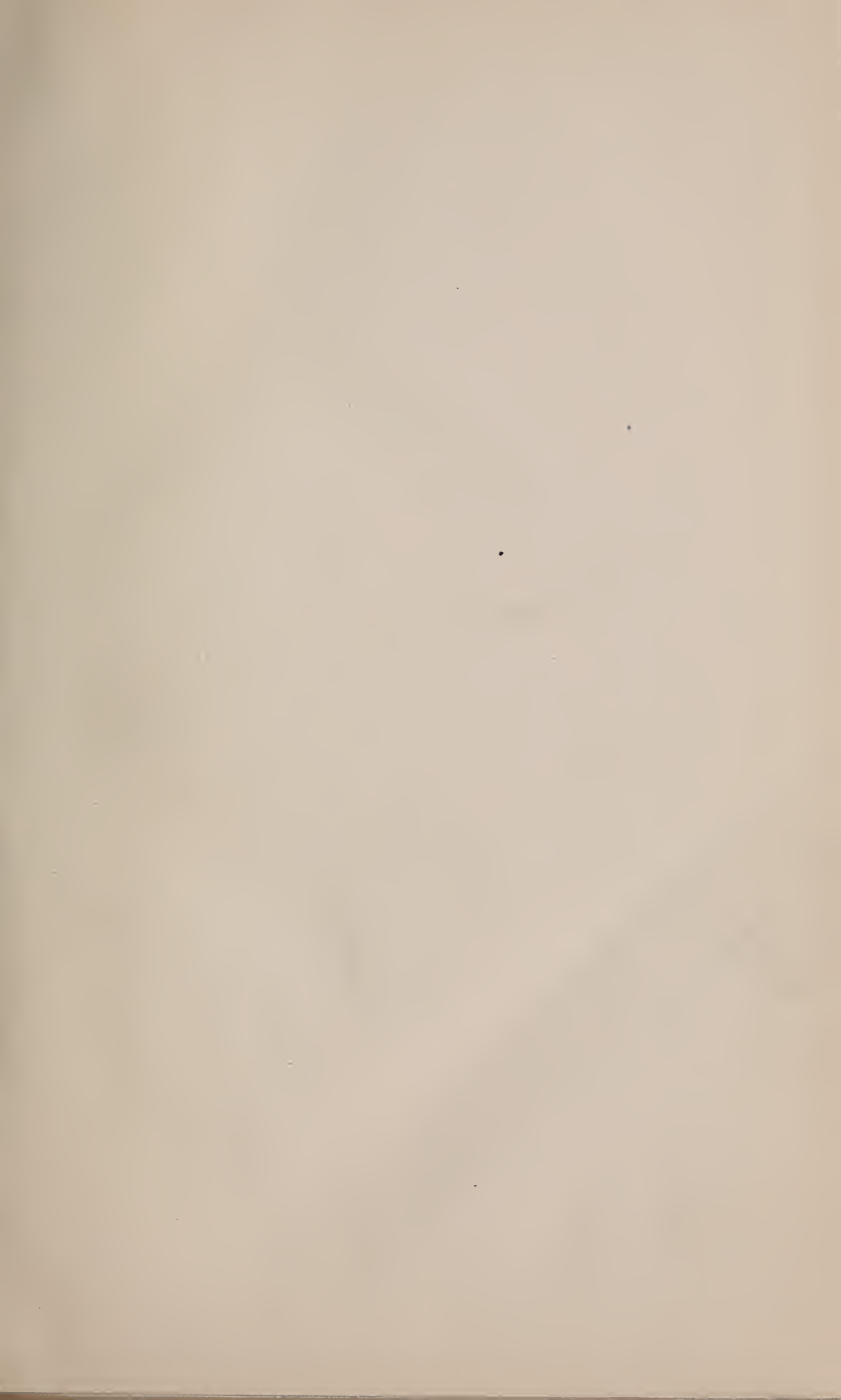


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A Young Man's Religion
and
His Father's Faith

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And His Father's Faith

BY

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N. MCGEE WATERS



NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.

PUBLISHERS

BR 121
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Published, September, 1905

TO
THE MEN YOUNG AND OLD
OF MY
BINGHAMTON AND BROOKLYN PARISHES
WHOSE UNFAILING FRIENDSHIP IS TO ME
A JOY UNSPEAKABLE

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The Young Man and His
Father's Faith

His mother said unto him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

And he said unto them, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business."

LUKE 2: 48-49.

*And these mounts of anguish number,
How each generation learned
One new word of that grand Credo, which
In prophet hearts hath burned;
Since the first man stood God-conquered,
With his face to heaven upturned.*

LOWELL.

*I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."*

LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER FIRST

The Young Man and His Father's Faith



YEAR or so ago, at one of the clubs, a dinner was given by a rich man to his son upon his twenty-third birthday. The young man was just graduated from college, and the father, with a proud heart had asked in half a hundred of his own friends to meet his boy. It was a proud moment—proud for the father, and proud for the boy. It was like the old Roman feast when the eldest boy assumed the Toga Virilis. Tears were in more than one eye when, in simple hearted speech and honest pride, the father said: "He's a good boy with a clean record. Neither Harry nor I know what he will do, nor how far he will go; but I want him to know his father's friends and be worthy of them." The speech-making went

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round. Merchant princes, august judges, statesmen, all joined heartily in the feast of friendship, and made pledges for the young man's future. At last the father arose and asked a minister to speak to the sentiment—"A Young Man's Religion and its Relation to his Father's Faith."

The discussion became informal, earnest, general. Some facts were brought out. The father was a Presbyterian Elder; the son had not joined any church. He used the words of Mr. Lincoln: "I have never joined myself with any church because I found difficulty in giving assent, without mental reservation, to the long and complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their articles of belief and confessions of faith. When any church will inscribe over its altars, as its sole substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church shall I join with all my heart and soul."

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The father had been converted in a most dramatic manner; the son counted himself a Christian, but knew not the day or the hour. "Indeed," he said, "I have always been a Christian." The father believed the Bible to be an infallible book, and without question accepted its every statement as a literal fact. The son regarded the Bible as a library of religious literature, to be studied, questioned, and judged as any other literature. The father thought of creation as an act; of conversion as an act; of sanctification as an act; of salvation as an experience. The son thought of creation as a growth. And in his thought salvation was character, and Evolution was the key to revelation and experience. Father and son were both sincere, but they viewed the great problems of Faith from different standpoints. They could not reach the same conclusions, because they started from different premises. The eighteenth and twentieth centuries do not see things with the same eyes. Sixty and twenty do not think alike.

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This is a picture of many a family.

It has in it the elements of pathos and the possibility of tragedy. It is a hard time for the boy when he outgrows his father's opinion. It is a hard time for the father when the son, true to his own personality, claims the responsibility of his own life. It threw a shadow over the home in Nazareth. For a time Mary thought her son crazy. But Mary waited, and Jesus was obedient, and the rift passed.

But alas! too often at such times the father loses patience, and the son forgets to be respectful, and there is a strife between son and sire. Moreover men are very sensitive about their religious ideas. Men go crazy about religion. Men turn persecutors for religion's sake. Religious disputes are acrimonious, and religious wars are cruel. All the wisdom of any age is sorely needed to understand a young man's religion and determine its relation to his father's faith. Both the man and the boy should pray for guidance. Often they fail to understand one another.

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I heard an old man say, "The world isn't like it was in the olden days. Children were then seen and not heard; now they know it all. People do not go to church like they used to. People do not keep Sunday like they used to. People do not read their Bible like they used to. The church does not have revivals like it used to. People do not get converted like they used to. Joining the church does not mean what it used to. Young people to-day are taught all sorts of strange notions and they do not believe things we used to. It is an age of worldliness and free-thinking. Religion is at ebb tide. The church is going to decay. Our young people have lost their faith." And the old man was sincere and he was sad.

I heard a young man talking, and he said: "I am glad I didn't live in the days when father was young, and Sunday began on Saturday night, and they went to church three times in one day. The gayest thing of all the week was the prayer-meeting. They were credulous then and believed in the super-

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natural. They were always meeting miracles by the way. Their creeds were long and formal and harsh, and all they knew about God was fear. They were Bibliolaters and regarded the Bible as a magical book. They worshipped it as the Roman Catholics do the bones of the Saints. I have got away from all that. I go to church when I feel like it, and play golf when I do not. I do not believe in creeds. I do not know what to think about the supernatural. As for miracles I never met any. The Golden Rule is a good enough creed for me. It does not matter much anyway what we believe. Our old minister was a dear old fossil, and father was a foggy. I cannot believe like them: but I love them. I believe in them. They had religion, if anybody ever did. I believe in their clean lives, and I wish I had their sure faith."

Now both the old man and the young one are right, and both are wrong. The old man is right when he thinks the young man lacking in respect. Irreverence is the besetting sin of youth. In the Fifth Commandment

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Moses made a law against it. The old man is right when he says that the times have changed, and the customs have changed, and the creeds have changed. Only we have changed more than he dreams. We live in a world of change. Snakes change their skins once a year. Once a year the earth has a new bridal dress. Truth also grows and outgrows. Every generation demands a new and larger expression. We do live in a different world from that in which our fathers lived.

We live after Columbus.¹ He is the man who, with ninety others, defied the wisdom of their age and the superstition of their time, and took their lives in their own hands, and impiously sailed away into the darkness of that sea which was believed to be the fringe on the edge of the world. When months had passed, and they were long given up for dead, one breaking day their eyes rested upon a land-locked horizon, and the stillness of a lost world and the knowledge of an old

¹ Jefferson's "Things Fundamental."

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one were disturbed by the shout of "Land! Land!" Our fathers had supposed that the world was a flat field, and lo! it was found out to be a round ball. That day the world was multiplied by two.

We live in the days since Martin Luther. For one thousand years the priests had kept the conscience of every man. For a thousand years darkness had rested upon the earth. Then a German priest, heavy hearted with the ignorance of the people, and aflame with wrath because of the corruption in the church and the oppression of the priests, put a trumpet to his lips and blew on it such a blast that the slumbering masses of Europe were awakened as from a dream. And these were his words, "The just shall live by faith." When he was cited for trial, he stood up in the presence of the priests and the powers of the church and thundered back—"Convince me of error from the Holy Scriptures and I will cheerfully recant. But I will not be silenced by man's wisdom." Our fathers had supposed that the salvation of a soul

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was in the keeping of the priest; but Luther made us understand that every man could come alone, without a priest, into the presence of God. That day the world learned that religion was larger than men had dreamed.

We live in the days since Copernicus and Galileo. One of them discovered a truth and was afraid to publish it to the world; the other one published that truth and went to the prison and the rack for his deed. But these are the men who have taught us that the world was not the centre of the universe, but instead only a very little star. And that with other stars it walks by day and by night around the great, wonderful sun. That day we found out that the universe was a thousand times larger than our fathers had dreamed.

Other scholars came. One, a little while ago, was a student of books, and lands, and seas. He read God's handwriting upon the rocks and stars. Gathering up bits of wisdom from field and mountain, mica-flake and ocean ooze, he pieced together the great story of

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God's creation. And lo! the world was not made in a week and man in a moment, but instead—

*“ I doubt not through the ages an increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.”*

Evolution is a larger story of divine providence than any of the fathers dreamed.

Other scholars came. And these began to study the Bible and lo! instead of a book, a library; instead of a proof text, a literature; instead of a dictation, an experience; instead of a typewriter for an inspired man, a poet, a seer, a martyr. And the Bible became greater and grander than ever before. Revelation instead of being a tiny lake, crystal in depth, and lost amid the hills, was like the boundless ocean, thundering on all shores and refreshing all lands. The Bible took on a new splendor and a new dignity that day.

Aye, the old man was right, we do live in a

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new world. Things have changed and the boy cannot think as his father thought. Look at him a moment. He was reared in a Christian home and learned to pray when he learned to talk. His mother taught him whole chapters of the Bible by heart. He was taught to believe that the Bible was literal prose, a dry-as-dust history. He believed that Joshua told the sun to stand still. He believed that a fish swallowed Jonah. He believed that God made the earth in six days. He grows up and he goes to college. He finds out that there was not one flood, but many floods. He finds out that the sun always stood still. He finds out that the earth was made through a long process of millions of years and is still being made. Now what is he to say? "Lost my faith?" "I must throw away my mother's Bible?" Not at all. Those opinions were not faith: mere credulity is not faith. For a thousand years the universities taught and the church taught that the sun revolved around the earth, now because we have found out that the earth revolves

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around the sun, astronomy is not destroyed, and we do not say that we will have to give up the sun. We have simply found out more about it than our fathers knew.

When we outgrow the coats we wore at ten years old and put on a coat of twenty-one years, that does not mean we do not believe in clothes. We have only grown. So knowledge grows. Revelation grows. We have not lost our faith: We have added to it; we have enlarged it. Faith is not an emotion. Faith is not credulity. This point needs a good deal of emphasis. For on every side we hear prophets, Jeremiahs, moaning and sighing, "For the faith once delivered to the Saints." They tell us that the cause of all modern ills is the new theology, and their cry is, let us get back to the old gospel.

I wonder where they can find the old gospel they seek. If they go back to Jonathan Edwards, he was driven out of Northampton because he was a heretic. If they go back to John Wesley, he was stoned out of the Eng-

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lish Church because he was unsound. If they go back to John Calvin, they have gone back to the Prince of new theologies. If they go back to Paul, they will find that he was hated by the Jewish nation for his heresy; and if they go back to Christ they will find that he was crucified on account of his doctrine.

Nay! in every age the great leader has always proclaimed a new theology. We have a new astronomy. We have a new education. We have a new geology and we must always have a new theology. Truth grows. To keep faith in astronomy is not to go back to the day of Copernicus. To keep faith in education is not to go back to the days of Erasmus. To keep faith with Methodism is not to go back to the time of Wesley; it is like Wesley to be in the very front of progress. To keep faith with the Puritans is not to go back to the days of John Robinson: but it is to keep firm hold of his great saying, "God has yet more light to break out of his word."

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*“New occasions teach new duties ; Time
Makes ancient good uncouth.
They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of Truth ;
Lo ! before us gleam her camp-fires ! we
Ourselves must Pilgrims be ;
Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly
Through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal,
With the Past's blood-rusted key.”*

“The young man is right when he claims the responsibility of his own life. Personality is sacred, and not even a father may violate it. No man, howsoever wise or howsoever beloved, can be judgment, or conscience, or faith, for any other man. I will listen to a man's reason, but I cannot believe because he tells me to. I must live my own life in my own way. I must have my own experience. I must write my own creeds.

But the young man is wrong when he believes that wisdom was born with him, or when he scoffs at the customs or faiths of the olden times.

We are our father's children, but we little

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remember what our fathers have done for us. We are heirs of far-off lands and ancient ages, and yet we have seldom thought of our indebtedness to the past. We remember the name of Guttenberg as that of the man who invented movable type, but we have never stopped to think that we should be personally grateful to him for all books. We have never given a thought to the man who first found out the use of fire; we do not know his name, and yet he it is who kindles the flames on our every hearth-stone. How much do we owe to the man who first invented speech? How much do we owe to the man who first found music? We have been ungrateful and we have even forgotten the names of our benefactors. It is easy enough to see what our fathers have given us—food, clothes, houses, and lands. It is not hard to realize what we have that we would not have if we had lived in our grandfather's time,—the telephone, the telegraph, the railroad. If we go back another generation, we find that men had no matches, no free schools, no libraries,

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no machinery, no churches, no country. For only that long ago men were pioneers, and dwelt in cabins, and fought with the wild beasts, and wilder men. They lived in a beginning of the world. And yet the American pioneer is not a real starting point. He had a grandfather and an ancestral home across the sea. He had invention in his hand and science in his heart. He was a long way from the first man.

Go back to the cradle of our Anglo-Saxon race. It is in the forests. This race of ours lived in huts and caves. Their raiment was the untanned skins of wild beasts, and their food was roots, and berries, and raw flesh, and reeking blood. They had not learned the use of fire in the preparation of food. It was a giant race, blue-eyed, golden-haired, cruel, and blood-thirsty. They were robbers on the land and pirates on the sea. Their sin was drunkenness. Their virtue was chastity. Their genius was freedom. And for religion, these stern men worshipped the stern Wodin in the forests at night, where amid the rays

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of flickering torches they sacrificed their own children in the worship of the gods. This is your family and mine, as it lived only a little while ago. We were like that long after the first Christmas. We were like that long after Cæsar built his Roman roads in Great Britain. We were like that when the wise men of Italy had already built cathedrals, and written theologies, and composed masses, and painted pictures. We were like that more than five hundred years after Christ came and Paul preached. We were like that to the very twilight of the modern world. And why are we not like that to-day? What has happened?

There is only one answer—"Our fathers have wrought." They have lived, and labored, and thought, and sought, and suffered, and died. Wisdom, it is true, did not die with them; but it is also true that Wisdom was not born with us. To deny or neglect their wisdom is to be a fool. Insane would be the man who would throw away all he has inherited in the material world—every house,

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every clearing, every tool, every art, and go back to the wilderness and naked savagery. Who would burn every book, forget every science, ignore all knowledge, scoff at every faith, mock at every prayer? Not even a young man could be so silly.

The father was right. He had a right to the attention, and obedience, and reverence of his son. Men before us have blazed out the great truths in agriculture, and commerce, and invention, and science, and philosophy, and religion. There they are, and there they will remain forever. And the roads they have built over the valleys, and the tunnels they have dug through the hills, are no more real and lasting than their great discoveries in thought and religion. They have given us all we have. They have a right to our respect and reverence forever. A man who would laugh at his father's faith, and see in all the creeds of the past only ignorance and absurdity, but exhibits his own narrow-mindedness and lack of comprehension.

“I know it is through ignorance that ye did

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it." Larger experience in life will give us more wisdom. You will find out, O young man, as you come into the realities of life, that there are many things both "in heaven and earth which have never been dreamed of in your philosophy." When you have fought as well as your fathers, you may become as wise as your fathers. It takes experience to make us wise.

In the State House in Boston are a hundred old battle-flags. Some of them are silk, some wool, and some only cotton. None are woven without a flaw, and some have glaring imperfections—not a stripe is straight, not a single star has a perfect angle. Not one of them have two-and-forty stars. Some of them have thirty-five; some have twenty, and some have only thirteen. There is not one that I would take to be my flag, to carry at the head of a regiment, or to be an emblem of my country. My country is larger, and grander, and greater than anything those flags know. But I love them, and I will teach my children to stand before them

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with uncovered brow. I love them for the rents and stains that tell of sufferings borne, of the battles won, of courage, and patriotism, and heroism. No, they are not my flags; but without them, and that for which they stand, my flag could never have been. The flag of forty stars is the child of the flag of thirteen stars. The old ideas of the past and the old definitions of the fathers, and the old creeds of the saints, may not represent our faith, and our hopes, and our fears, of to-day, but they are the creators of it. Without their faith our broader faith would never have been. Even as to-day is the child of a hundred yesterdays, the religion of the young man is the legacy of the old man's faith.

It is only because of their partial knowledge that the young and the old stumble over one another. There have always been the old and the young, and they need one another. The Conservative and the Radical supplement one another. If there were only young men, the race would forever rest in the ignorance of childhood. If there were only old men,

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thought would petrify. Both minister to the kingdom of God.

Forms change, but the spirit abides. Definitions change, but Christ is the "same to-day, yesterday, and forever." Creeds are modified, but the verities never die—and now abideth Faith, Hope, Love—and they are more undimmed than ever. Sin still is, and still there is a Saviour "who saves His people from their sins." Men are not converted in the same dramatic way as their fathers, but they are converted. They do not go to church from the same motives as of old—duty and fear—but more young men are Christian and engaged in Christian work than ever before. Men love Christ as of old, and never in all history did He have such authority. The statecraft of the world affirms that its highest principles are drawn from the man of Galilee. The kings of the earth and the rulers acknowledge Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The working-man has doubted the church; but he does not doubt Christ. The sermon on

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the mount is his inspiration and the brotherhood of man his dream.

When has the intellect of the world found fault either with Christ's character or Christ's message? Take His word on immortality—is not it our highest word, and is not even science of our day building arguments to prove it from the world of time and matter? Take Christ's idea of God—a loving, personal Father. That it is true and reasonable is not only the Christian's hope to-day, but the philosopher's affirmation. Whether it be certain or not, is it not a unanimous testimony of believer and sceptic that it is altogether the noblest notion of God the world has ever had? The intellectual grip of Jesus on this age is secure. Alike in politics and social questions and in religion do the masters, whether they call themselves Christian or Agnostic, rest their teaching on the precepts of Jesus. The scholarship and the thought of the world looks upon Jesus crying, "Master—unto whom shall we go: thou hast the words of Eternal Life!"

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The spirit of Christ is to-day in men's hearts as truly as ever. Is not the haystack at Williamstown, and the missionary's monument at Oberlin? Is not Damien the martyr of Molokai, and Stanley of Africa? Did not some of us see and know Paton who shed his blood for Christ's sake and lost men's sake? Where is there any speech that can tell the inside story of the Boxer Rebellion? The Anglo-Saxon missionaries were heroic as any who sleep in Westminster Abbey. But they were no whit more heroic than the Chinese men and women who were offered life upon recantation, but who never wavered, but like Stephen, crying "O Lord Jesus," gave up the ghost.

The letter has changed, but the spirit remains. Our conception of it is new and enlarged, but it is the same old Bible. Our account of creation is fuller, but it is still the wonder and work of God. Our creeds may be new, but they still seek to define the ways of the same good and loving God. The old and the new differ some, but they are alike

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more. Their differences are non-essentials. Their resemblances are fundamentals. After all the father is like the child. When morning dawns they look out on the same world. At the noontime they bear the same burdens, face the same heat, and enter the same storms. They have the same faults; they suffer the same pain; they are healed by the same physician. Alike they hope and fear, do and dare, and strive and thrive. They are baptized with the same sorrow; crowned with the same love, and comforted with the same divine hope. And when night comes, seventy and sixteen say the same prayer—

*“Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us:
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil;
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.”*

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These are the last words our fathers utter as they fall asleep: and they make music on the lips of every child.

What is Religion?

I perceive that in all things ye are very religious.

PAUL TO THE ATHENIANS.

Man is incurably religious.

SABATIER.

Religion is morality touched by emotion.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The thing a man does practically believe; the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny therein.

CARLYLE.

*A soul with no religion . . .
Was without rudder, anchor, compass—might be
Blown every way with every gust, and wreck
On any rock.*

*If man be only
A willy-nilly current of sensations—
Reaction needs must follow revel—yet—
Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he must have
Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?
Remorse then is a part of Destiny.
Nature a liar, making us feel guilty
Of her own faults.*

*The last gleam of an after-life but leaves him
A beast of prey in the dark.*

TENNYSON.

CHAPTER SECOND

What is Religion?



NO man remembers when he first heard of God. When we learn to talk, we already know how to pray. The church of our childhood is as familiar as “the little

house where we were born.” Over our youth the minister, as well as the teacher, stood guard; and when we met them in the street, to each alike, we took off our hat. The first day of every week was as much given up to religion as, once a year, the Fourth of July was given up to patriotism. Religion was as much a part of our surroundings as air, or sunshine, or the summer, or the family affection.

Our world began to grow. Grandmother told us stories. The first one was about the birth of a baby when a star shone and the angels sang. Another one was about a babe whose mother

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defied a great king and saved the baby's life by casting him adrift upon a great river in an ark, which she had made for him with her own hands. In every one of these stories there was hidden away a knowledge of God.

Since then we have read many books. But among them all, there are no books like those in which the great stories of the race are writ. Men never grow too old for the storyteller. Herodotus is still young, and has the power to charm. Ulysses, with his wanderings, is still the hero of the growing boy. Americus may have been uncertain, and untruthful even, but because he first described it, men have named the new world after him. One reason why Paul has so large a place in the New Testament is because his life reads like a fairy tale, and because he was a traveller in many lands. We may have neglected his letters, and cared nothing for his words on fore-ordination and sin; but we have never grown weary of tracing his journey on the map, and listening to him as he speaks of the strange customs of many lands. His shipwreck, and the

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story of his coming to Rome, have never lost their power to intrall. Higher yet flames our imagination when we see him go to Athens.

We like to follow this old-time traveller through the "City of the Violet Crown." We know that he beheld the wharves and warehouses and fleets of the merchantmen, whose white wings covered the Mediterranean Sea. All these witnesses of Athenian wealth and commerce Paul saw, because he came to Athens by the sea. We know he met their philosophers—both Epicurean and Stoic—and many was the hard bout he had with them in argument. He must have looked upon the Parthenon—it was the pride of the ancient world, as it is the wonder of the modern. I am sure he went out to find the Agora from whose stone steps Demosthenes had thundered. Without fail he marked the spot where Socrates had spent his last days and had ascended in his chariot of martyrdom, calmly talking of God and immortality. I think he stood to weep there.

Athens cast a spell over Paul, and there is evidence of it in the broad horizons of his Mars

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Hill sermon. I wish he had had the time to write down for us all that he saw and all that he thought. But Paul had time to state only the most important thing, and that he set down at length. The most important thing Paul found in Athens was not its schools, nor its philosophies, nor its commerce, nor its art, but "I perceive that in all things ye are very religious." The main thing about the old Greek world was its religion. The temple was first in Athens, even as it was in Jerusalem. Religion is the deepest thing about any nation or people. Religion is everywhere; and nowhere do men rise higher than their religion. Read all the books of great travellers, ancient and modern, and in not one of them will you find an account of a people without religion. Their religion may be a poor, dumb thing; but crude and cruel as it is, it has its votaries. Over its altars, smoking and bloody, the sorrows and mysteries of human life are sobbed out, and the litanies of the race are sung. Paul is right, "God hath made of one blood all the nations of men . . . that they

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should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." The fundamental fact, then, about every people is their religion.

John Ruskin says that "In three books the story of any race is writ—the book of their Art; the book of their Words, and the book of their Deeds."

Let us open the book of their Art. We can no more understand a people's art until we understand their religion, than we can read Homer without knowing Greek. It is their religion that makes Egyptian temples so vast and so full of gloom. Their nature worship is what made the Greek temples low and earth-loving. It is their worship of a transcendent God, "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain," that made the cathedral builders pile stone upon stone until the turrets of their Gothic temples seem to reach the very sky. All great art is symbolic of religion. Oriental rugs are prayers woven upon the loom. Their tapestries and their ceramic arts all bear the

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autograph of religion. The painting of the world is a litany of the world. Religion is the theme of the world's art.

Open the book of their words.

In literature, as in man, only the spiritual is immortal. Books without religion do not live. Ancient literatures are ancient liturgies. Even the novelist gets his best hearing when he writes about the problems of the soul. What are the great philosophies? Definitions men have attempted of God and His handiwork. What are the great histories? They that tell of the rise and flower of the human soul. What are the great orations? Those on the sacred themes. What is poetry? All great poets are first prophets, and their verse brings to us visions and harmonies of the spiritual world. Of literature, religion is both spring and stream. As Emerson says:

*“ Out of the heart of Nature rolled
The burden of the Bible old,
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below—
The Canticles of love and woe.”*

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Religion is the inspiration of literature.

What do you find written in the books of their deeds? Look at the great migrations of the world, and follow them back to their first cause. We read, "Abram went out from Haran not knowing whither he went"—why? For religion's sake. Moses led the Israelites away from the flesh-pots of Egypt—why? For religion's sake. The Hebrew people, long captives, left rich Babylon for Judean wastes to take up the hardship of the pioneer—why? For religion's sake. Providence allowed Alexander the Great to conquer the world, and in the wake of his phalanxes the Greek tongue followed everywhere—why? For religion's sake. That Providence, in His own good time, permitted Cæsar to build up the greatest empire of history, and from his imperial capital to rule the world—why? For religion's sake. We are fond of telling of the Pilgrim, who "moored his bark on the wild New England shore," and we are just as proud to tell that he did it for religion's sake. Why did Thomas Hooker

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and his band of English folk stay not with the colony of Massachusetts Bay, but instead journeyed through the forests one hundred miles to the untamed wilderness of the Connecticut? For religion's sake. Ask the fathers why they forsook the New England hills and laws for the plains and lawlessness of Kansas when she was bleeding. It was for religion's sake. Why yesterday and to-day do the students of Yale, going out from the college walls, pass by comfortable settlements in home churches, and pause not in their march until they find themselves amid the wilds of the far West? Why do they live and labor there in poverty and isolation, with their own naked hands laying the foundation stones of American commonwealths? For religion's sake.

We have been reading only from one page of the world's deeds, and religion is written all over it. In all the book "there is no speech nor language where its voice is not heard." Religion is the mainspring of the world's action.

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We see that religion is not only a very universal thing, but a very deep thing in human life. All our lives we have heard its words tinge and color the speech of the people about us. We have been accustomed to see its temples in every city and countryside. One day out of seven is set apart sacredly for its services. Scholars are its ministers. Multitudes are its votaries. The State respects and protects it with laws. We teach childhood its mysteries; and we invoke its sanctions upon all the solemn hours of life. When the babe is born, our word is, "We have gotten a man child from the Lord." When love claims its own at the marriage altar, we send for the man of God, and his word is, "Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." When death comes and lays its hand upon our first-born, until the hand is icy cold and the brow is as white as ashes, our breaking hearts sob, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away." Religion overarches all our lives.

What is this universal and deep thing which

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men have named their religion? That is our question—What is religion?

The first reply men make to the question is, Religion is worship; a matter of form and prayer.

So the churches vast and minsters rise and are the pride and glory of the men who build them. The pride of every Jew still is Solomon's temple. India is full of temples greater than St. Peter's at Rome. The temple at Thebes—is it not one of the seven wonders of the world? Who has not heard of Constantino's St. Sophia—first Christian and now for centuries a Mohammedan temple? Of the great cathedrals we have all read, and wondered and marvelled. They are poems and prayers in stone; and every one is a Mecca for a world's pilgrimage. Men's greatest buildings have been their temples. Into those temples the multitudes have crowded with litany and ritual, and chant and prayer, and psalm and incense. There God hath come till the divine glory filled all the place and smote the hearts of the worshippers. Large is the

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worship of the world; but worship is not religion. It is only the language of religion.

From the mistaking of worship for religion has come the dividing of life up into parts called the sacred and secular, and it is a very harmful division. We have thought Sunday was a religious day, and have forgotten that all days were religious. We have thought that a priest was a divine man, and forgot, too, that all men were divine. We have thought that the prayer-meeting was a religious place, and have forgotten that all places are religious places. No, religion is not the church, and it is not worship; it lies back of and is greater than all churches and all worship.

Then there is another reply, which is more common to us Protestants. Religion is a form of sound words. It is right thinking. It is to believe something. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Men read that beautiful saying of Paul and say, "Yes, if you believe that Mary's child is the Son of God, you are a religious man. If you have some smaller definition of Christ, or none at

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all, you are not a religious man." Religion is a dogma. It is a creed. So bigotry is brought forth, and not only the Pagan world, but a large slice of the Christian world is deemed irreligious.

Orthodoxy is made the test of faith, and the unorthodox man is set down as an infidel. But the saints of to-day were all heretics yesterday. Busy are we to-day building the monuments of those whom our fathers stoned. John Milton was not orthodox, but is he not the grandest poet of Puritan faith? Has our age had any prophet of more inspiration than James Martineau? Who in our time has sung such hymns as Whittier? Where is there a statesman with more Christian vision than Senator Hoar? These men are not orthodox, but are they irreligious? Have not their voices sounded for the freedom of the race? Have not their songs thrilled and stilled the hopes and fears of men? Have they not lifted the hearts of multitudes into touch with the Infinite Father? If they are not religious, what is religion?

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A creed is not a religion—it is only some man's description of religion. Religion has its churches and rituals—they are its schools. It has its great historic creeds—they are the registers of Christian experience. They tell of victories won and measure the heights and depths of faith. They are the psalms of the Saints. Then let us not confound them with religion itself, lest they become stumbling-blocks and burdens too heavy for men to bear. Rather let us think of them as the rich tapestries of our faith, which, like trophies, we would hang upon our altars. Religion makes creeds; creeds do not make religion. Back of all churches, and all worship, and all faiths, and all creeds, and in them all, there is religion itself—the life and soul of them all.

A third reply, and I think it is truer than the others, is, Religion is an experience. In some circles common parlance puts it, "He has got religion"; "he has lost his religion." This is a saying apt to be on the lips of the uncritical in the time of great revivals. By this is meant that the man has been converted.

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He has joined the church. He has the witness of the spirit. The truth of this reply lies in its recognition that religion is something vital—a thing of life in the man himself. Its error is inadequacy. It takes the part for the whole. Feeling is not religion. *Afflatus* is not religion. Ecstasy is not religion. Emotion is not religion—though religion begets and colors feeling and emotion. A high state of exaltation is no more religion than a state of depression is atheism. The prophet had his hours under the juniper tree. Even Jesus could not remain permanently on the Mount of Transfiguration. The flower is not the plant. The poem is not the human intellect. A lyric is not all of love. Worship is not religion—it is its language. Creeds are not religion—they are its definitions. Experience is not religion—it is its flower. We demand a larger word. We must have an inclusive account.

Our age loves to study everything in the light of its origin. Let us turn our inquiry to that method. Whence came the religion of

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man? What is its origin? Here also we come upon surface answers and misleading statements. Here the cynical historian is apt to appear whose *penchant* is for destruction. He takes seriously the French epigram "History is a set of fables mankind has agreed to believe in," and begins to scout and scuttle the most cherished beliefs of mankind. He assures us Moses is a myth. Job is only a name. Homer never lived and never sung. Our Bible is a book of fables; the lives of the Saints are but a tissue of lies. Then he becomes audacious, and repeats the saying of the old scoffer of Rome's degenerate days, that religion was a useful device to keep the populace in subjection. From this saying of a politician, our critic reaches the rather large conclusion that "all religion is mere device, an invention of the priests, with which they may hoodwink the people."

Such statements are their own refutation. Religion made the priest, and not the priest religion. Carlyle was never more the inspired prophet than when he said, in speaking of

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this very thing: "The religions of men all have a truth in them or men would never have taken them up. Quackery and dupery do abound; in religions, above all in the oldest and decaying religions, they have fearfully abounded; but quackery was never the originating influence in such things; it was not the health and life of such things, but their disease, the sure precursor of their being about to die. Let us not forget this—it is a sorry hypothesis—that of quackery giving birth to any faith, even of savage men. Quackery gives birth to nothing; it gives death to all things. Man everywhere is the born enemy of lies."

Sometimes we are told, as Herbert Spencer has preached, that the invisible world first got afloat through dreams and shadows and trances; and religion at first was a belief in ghosts, and then became a sort of myth or allegory. But it is a most earnest thing to be alive in the world, and to die has never been fun for any man. And men never did hang their lives to idle tales, and never did risk

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their lives for myths and allegories. However crude some of those old ideas may seem to us, though they be as crude as the old Scandinavian sagas, or as superstitious as Dante's epic, still for the honest, sternly lived men of those far-off days, these expressed their honest realities. It was their way, imperfect as it may now seem to their children, of expressing what was the true theorem of the universe, as they saw it from their low ground and small horizons.

But we are told, "Religion has been superstitious, and superstition is passing away, and maybe religion will pass away with it." The flintlock musket has passed away, but has the need of firearms passed away with it? No, it has invented the needle-gun and repeating-rifle. The old law of personal vengeance has passed away, but not the necessity of punishment for crime. That survives and has given us code, court, and jury. The old alchemy has passed away, but are oxygen and hydrogen no more in the air, and the elements no more in the ground? Nay, out of the old

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alchemy there has come modern chemistry. The old soothsayer of former days has passed away: we no more hear the incantation of the witch; but has disease passed away with need for its healing? Nay, is it not true that out of the old ignorance and out of the old mistakes men have found out better than ever before how to heal and care for the human body? The law is everywhere present—"First the ear, then the blade, and then the full corn in the ear." The perfect comes by way of the imperfect; the complete by way of the incomplete; and the truth by way of the half truth.

No man is born six feet tall. He comes into the world by the way of the cradle, and the nursery, and the playground, and that earliest time is a time of ignorance and silly toys. But, after all, the very toys make for wisdom and enrich all his after life. And so if you tell me that religion has come into the world from nature worship and ghost worship, and a thousand superstitions have clung to it, I am not disturbed. I only know then that religion

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has come into the world as everything has come, by the way of the unfinished and imperfect, and it has always been going on from more to more. Its growth proves its vitality; its improvement is certificate of its survival.

Let us look closely for the origin of religion. We find the source of religion in man himself; it is potential within him; an implication of his nature.

I know that men who write infallible things in magazine articles, for five dollars a page, have been telling us that man is only a mechanism, and that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile," and that man is simply a superior and fine sort of animal. But man is more than a mechanical toy. The physical man is the house: the man is more than the house. Man can never convince mankind otherwise.

I know the materialist has offered proof.¹ He has dissected my body, and this is his report. It was in all the scientific records a dozen years ago—"I find brains, but no love; I find

¹ Lyman Abbott's "Signs of Promise."

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bone and muscle, but no soul." "I can see bone, and blood, and bile, and heart, and lungs. I can see every organ, but I cannot see mind. I cannot see any emotion. I cannot see any soul. It simply isn't there." Am I convinced? Not at all.

There are two men that one scarcely knows what to do with: One of them is the man who denies the reality of the knowledge that comes through his physical senses. He will not believe anything which he can see.

The other one is the man who denies the reality of everything which his senses do not report; who will not believe anything which he cannot see.

The first man says that all knowledge which we derive through our five senses is a delusion. He steps on a tack, or gets bitten by a bulldog, and when we sympathize with him he promptly says, "There was no tack; there was no bull-dog. I was simply doing a bit of sharp thinking, or have been the victim of a pugnacious idea." You cannot argue with the man who denies the realities of what his senses re-

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port. You cannot prove to a blind man that the rose is red.

Then there is the other man, who says that all knowledge is derived through the physical senses. He refuses to believe in anything he cannot see, or hear, or touch, or taste, or smell. He will not believe in hope, because nobody ever saw it. He sets love down for a tingling of the nerves, because nobody has ever weighed it. He denies the reality of the soul, because you cannot gather it up in an urn. He disbelieves in God, because no man has been able to see God with the naked eye.

You and I say that he is like the other man, and it is hard to do anything with him, because you cannot prove to a blind man that there is such a thing as light.

The fact is that the soul has its avenues of knowledge and the body has its organs of knowledge.

There are some things which we know as really as we know physical things, which "eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard."

We know love; we know hope; we know the

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categories of human thought; we know God and immortality. Muscle and bone and nerve are realities, but so are love and hope and faith realities. I believe this is an honest world, and I believe what my physical senses tell me. And because I believe this world is true, I also believe what my spiritual senses tell me. That is what Lord Tennyson, who went to the bottom of nineteenth century materialism, means when he sings of—

*“That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense.”*

That is what Robert Browning, the poet of the soul, has in mind when he says:

*“I know that He is there, as I am here,
By the same proof, which seems no proof at all,
It so exceeds familiar forms of proof.”*

The soul has visions, and language, and appetites, and craves the Infinite, and claims the spiritual. It demands God and worship as the body demands bread and exercise. It is hungry for the Divine as the mind is hungry for

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knowledge. Religion is as much a necessity to my nature as knowledge or food. "My heart cries out for God, the living God," and without God the human soul will die. "Forests lie cradled in an acorn cup." Libraries all exist in the babe's intellect. Religion lies wrapped ready to grow in every human soul.

Another source of religion is in the universe. The man who cannot find spirit within me with his microscope, and because he cannot find it says "Man is a soulless clod," hunts through the universe for God. He comes back and says, "I have travelled in every land, I have climbed every mountain; with my telescope I have swept every horizon; with my microscope I have explored every tiniest cranny, and I can find stars, and suns, and trees, and lands, and worlds, and seas, but I cannot find God." "The heavens are empty; the great Companion is dead." I do not believe his last saying any more than his first.

Who made the world? Nobody; it happened. When you say that, the very children will laugh at you. Everybody knows that from

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nothing comes nothing, and everything must have an adequate cause.

Who created the world? If you follow the materialism of our fathers, you answer, "Chance." If you want to be up-to-date and scientific, you answer, "A fortuitous concatenation of atoms." Now I laugh at you.

I went to see Kellar.¹ He took an empty cup and held it in his hand, and then he began to wave a wand over it, and out of the cup came birds, rabbits, roses, and at last a tree which was filled with fruit. "Oh," you say, "that is sleight-of-hand." But Kellar is a tyro as compared with the original atom, if this account be true. For these men tell us that from this atom, in which there is no mind and no will, there have come not only stars, and suns, and worlds, but there have come also man, and music, and literature, and love, and heroism, and faith. Sir Hoary Atom is the author of Hamlet and the Messiah. He built St. Peter's and the Brooklyn Bridge. He planned Waterloo, and invented the steam-

¹ Hillis's "The Influence of Christ in Modern Life."

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ship. He is the father of Washington, and from his loins descended Isaiah with the splendors of his eloquence, and Jesus with His cross. To utter that claim is to answer it. When did dead matter ever create anything? As a boy George Washington knew that chance never wrote a name in a garden bed. Man knows there would have been no house unless first there had been a man. Man knows that chance and atoms do not account for the world, but, as Herbert Spencer says, "We are in the midst of an Infinite and Eternal Energy whence all things proceed."

Once again our materialist rejoins:¹ An argument for a First Cause cannot lead us to an Absolute Being. We ask, Who caused this First Cause? Who made God?

And yet that is a kitten playing with its tail. In any philosophy of existence we must assume a final world-ground. The materialist's "force" or "energy" is assumed to be final. We must think of this world-ground as either matter or spirit. The one man calls the First

¹ Jones's "Social Laws in the Spiritual World."

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Cause "force," the other calls the First Cause "spirit." As a matter of experience, we know spirit as a cause, and we do not know matter as a cause. It is easier to think of the world-ground as spirit. Anything else is unthinkable.

John Fiske,¹ Herbert Spencer's disciple, knows that this Eternal Energy must be thought of as a personal being; that the mind cannot stop short of it; that all experience certifies that spirit is creative, not matter: and so he reminds us of a saying which Goethe has put into the lips of Faust, when he walks with Marguerite in the garden, and she asks him if he believes in God. His reply is, "So long as the tranquil dome of heaven is raised above our heads, and the bloomed set earth is spread forth beneath our feet; while the everlasting stars course in their mighty orbits and the lover gazes with delight into the eyes of her who loves him, so long must our hearts go out to Him who made the heavens and the earth." Aye, there

¹ Fiske's "The Idea of God."

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is a soul in the universe. All men believe in Him. Only the fool hath said, "There is no God."

In our search for the origin of religion we at last have come upon two personalities: One of them is I, *Ego*, soul, "Lord and Master in this our present house of clay." The other, Lord, Maker, and Master of the universe, who "stands within the shadow, keeping watch above His own," and is God. "Man is a living soul," "God is a spirit." Intelligent Will alone is creative. Personality is the beginning of all things.

Whenever you come to personal beings, you come upon what is called relationship. They can understand and talk to one another; they can love and hate; they can make friendship or declare war; they can live together or apart; they may be kinsfolk. Out of this relationship between personal beings comes the highest, noblest things we know.

Here is the relationship between friend and friend. Out of it springs that affection of David for Jonathan, whose story never grows

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old nor fails to melt the heart. Out of this relationship goes up the heart sobs called the great elegies. They are griefs set to music. Here is Milton's "Lycidas," with its organ-like music. Here is Shelley's "Adonais," as gentle as an angel's tears. Here is Tennyson's "In Memoriam," where grief sits by the grave of a friend through long years.

Here is the relationship of teacher and scholar. Under this gentle yoke Socrates and Plato walk together down the halls of fame. Jesus and John loved one another, and grew strangely alike, and filled all the dark corners of the world with the splendors of love.

Here is the relationship of husband and wife—on this foundation is the world built. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." That is the test of love the Master Himself gave, and yet that is the heroism that is being wrought out by every fireside.

Here is the relationship between parent and child. There is no love like a mother's, and there is no heroism like a father's. In a book

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of the present year I read of a man who writes the tragedy of his life in words like this, "Unto you a child is born—that is what the telegram said.¹ Then the fear of fatherhood mingled wildly with the joy of creation. Soon I learned to love the wee thing as it grew and waxed strong, and as the little soul unfolded itself in the twitter and cry of the half-formed words, and its eye grew bright and caught the glimmering flash of life. How beautiful he was. So sturdy and masterful he grew; so filled with bubbling life. We were not far from worshipping this revelation of the Divine." There are some here who have passed through that glorious noontime of love's splendid day. But the man goes on: "I heard a voice calling me at midnight, and it was crying, 'The shadow of death! The shadow of death!' The hours trembled on; the night listened; the ghastly dawn glided like a tired thing across the lamplight. And then we two looked upon the child as he turned away his eyes and stretched

¹ Professor Du Bois's "The Souls of Black Folk."

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his tired hands and passed out into the shadow of death. And in that sick chamber writhed the world's most piteous thing—a childless mother." Some of you have stood in that death chamber, and some of you walked henceforth through life, and for beauty there was only ashes; and the sun had ceased to shine. And for you the days were only a burden, and you met them with a broken heart. The love of parent and child is a cup of joy. Alas! when death rudely breaks the cup!

The neighbors had met together about the dust of a very old woman in a New England hamlet. Some spoke in whispers, commiserating the dead woman's hard life. She had been born in this very house; she was married in this house; she lived all her life in this house. She had never seen a railroad train. She had never had a silk dress. She had never been to Boston. The conclusion was that Aunt Polly's life of threescore years and twenty and ten was a failure. A day later her son, a Senator of the United States, spoke gently of his mother to his friends. He said: "The

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farm was stingy, the climate was harsh, the family was large, father was close. Eleven of us children went through college, and mother did it all. She began her work in the morning a great while before day, and she continued her work into the night, long after the family slept. It was toiling and contriving, and making, and mending, and saving. Sometimes it was watching, and nursing, and fearing, and praying, and pleading. Mother did it all." Then he went on to tell of how one brother was a Governor, another a Judge, another a banker, and how each had turned out well, and was playing a man's part, or a woman's part, in the great world, and he always ended by saying, "Mother did it all." Who yet has sounded the depths of a mother's heart? Who yet has searched the heights and depths of a father's care? Who of us can put into words the heroism of life that has bubbled up like a spring out of this deep relationship of parent and child? "Relationship is a great ring of fire which the great God hath put around the human race—its

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emblem of divinity." Blood is thicker than water; relationship is the strongest thing in the universe.

Now, then, I am ready to tell you what religion is—*Religion is the relationship, and the life that grows out of the relationship, between a personal being called God and a personal being called man.* It is the family life of the soul. Religion is relationship! Relationship is something vital which cannot be put on or off, and belongs to every man's life. Every man, then, must have some religion.

This grows on us as we go on to think a little. By his body man is related to the physical universe. He has intercourse with it. He can mould and shape it. Without its ministry he would die. He must have food, and raiment, and sunshine, and air, and water. He digs, and builds, and weaves, and plants; he cannot help it. It is his appetite and his necessity. It may be weak, it may be strong, it may be little, or it may be large, but every man has some physical life.

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Life is more than food or raiment. Man is mentality. By his intellect he is related to the reason in the universe. This is why he is born asking questions—whence? That is why he dies asking questions—whither? Man is a live interrogation point, and he cannot help it. It is both hunger and satisfaction. All books and all knowledge are the output and outcry of this mental relationship. It may be flickering, almost ready to go out, or it may be blazing, like the noonday sun, but whether it be rich, or whether it be poor, every man has some intellectual life.

Mind is only the second story of man. He is a three-storied being. The “upper room” is where the spirit dwells. He cannot escape the spiritualities; he was made that way and has relationship with the great Oversoul. He can no more do without religion than he can do without breathing. It is the condition of his very existence. Every man, then—the ignorant man, the pagan man, the cultivated man, the man of reverence, and the man of indifference—has some religious life. Relig-

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ion is more than ceremony or creed or cult—it is the life of the soul, and its relation to the soul of the universe. Every man has some religion, even as he has some bodily form and features, and some mental existence. A man without physical life would be a ghost. A man without intellectual life would be an idiot. A man without spiritual life would be a beast.

Religion is man's spiritual relationship to the universe, and every one of you has some religion. It is a relationship—you cannot escape it. You can forget it, you can deny it, but you cannot put it off or away. It is a vital thing. It throbs in the blood and moulds and shapes and leads you in spite of yourself. This is a thing I want to impress upon you, that every one of you, whatever your creed, whatever your condition, whatever your learning or ignorance, every one of you has some religion. It is as much a part of you as your walking or your talking or your breathing. You are related to God.

Another thing comes out of this. Relation-

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ship is a very great word; indeed, it is an opening door. It always leads to something. To enter into new relationship is to possess a new world.

The babe is born, as we say, "trailing clouds of glory from heaven, our home." But into what does he come? Into a human relationship. Arms are stretched for his embrace. Lips are set for his kissing. A home is built for his habitation. Parents, and kinsfolk, and friends and enemies, all become part of his life. This human relationship has opened up for the babe a new world.

At last he outgrows his mother's arms, and his father's dooryard, and the little man turns his face to the school. Teachers, playmates, all the joys and sorrows of school days come upon him now like a flood. His new relationship has brought him into a new world.

He outgrows the school-time. His mother cries because he is six feet tall. His father blesses him because he is one-and-twenty years old. And the State comes now and holds

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out her hand and bids him enter into her service, and her life, and her duties, and his new relationship of citizenship introduces him into a new world.

Then, one day as he rejoices in the wider horizon of his new life, love meets him by the way. Yesterday the young man counted his liberty and freedom from responsibility to be the jewel and ornament of life. To-day, with gladness in his heart, he binds himself to new responsibilities for himself and other lives, and redoubles his toil that he may build his own fireside; and now wife and child sit by his hearthstone. Sorrow writes for him elegies; and joy bubbles like a spring and sings like a lark. A new and holy world is his because he has entered into a new relationship. The man is growing, his horizons are widening. He is leaving the brute for the Divine.

Some day a great scholar meets him by the way and offers him the keys of knowledge. He opens up to him the books of wisdom. He introduces him into the charmed and sa-

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cred circle of the world's seers. After long years he loses himself in the wilderness, or all alone he climbs the top of the highest mountains. He rakes the fires from the sunset. He fingers the stars and weighs the worlds in his hand. Sometimes he is caught up as in a cloud of vision, and is carried away in the spirit until he beholds glories upon glories of the unseen, and catches the full harmonies of celestial music. He lives in a new atmosphere. He has become a scholar and a poet. A new relationship has opened a new world. He may be about his fishing, like Peter; or about his money-getting, like Judas; or about his day-dreams of the Messiah, like Nathaniel. A new day dawns. One with a face of love, like an angel; or of wisdom, like the Master; or of sorrow, like the Saviour, meets him in life midway, and with beckoning hand says, "Follow me and I will show you the path that leads to the divine heights." He leaves off whatever he is doing and follows the Master. Sometimes he is led upon the Mount of Transfiguration, when the heavens

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are opened and mysteries are only windows. Sometimes he has been led into the valley of Gethsemane—his cry is for the Eternal and his comforter is the Everlasting God. The Bible becomes dear to him because it is the literature of the soul. The saints become dear to him now because they have won victories for the soul. Poverty and wealth, hardship and joy, trial and victory are alike dear to him now because they have all the touch of the Eternal. His feet are upon the ground, but his head is in the heavens. His body is upon the earth, but his soul keeps company with the Divine. He has walked through the open doorway called religion, and he has become the citizen of a new and divine world.

Religion is relationship with the Infinite—who can describe it? New vistas are opening. We cannot see to the end. The distances stagger the heart. We can only dream of this new and divine relationship of men. If I am related to the African blood, it makes my hair kinky. If I am related to the Saxon blood, it gives me the golden poll and the

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deep blue eye. If I am related to the sons of Italy, it gives me the olive skin, and the eye of midnight, and blood shot through with fire and poetry. If I am related to God—if His blood is in my veins—what will this relationship do for me? I do not know. The Apostle did not know. He could only say, “Now, beloved, we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

Are you making much about this divine relationship? Are you entering into this great new world? Do you know the Bible and are you deeply read in its literature? Do you know the church and are you being trained in it? It is the school of the spirit. It is for the development of the religious life that this earthly life is planned. Life trains the body, but the body dies like last summer's leaves. Life trains the mind, but knowledge too shall pass away, even as the heavens shall roll up as a scroll. “The soul is immortal and will journey across the years and beyond them.” What is your soul? Is it an ignorant bar-

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barian, or is it a cultivated son of God? Is it a hovel, or is it a temple?

*“Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's un-
resting sea!”*

What is Christianity?

What is Christianity?

It is to believe that at the heart of things there is a Power with a mind and a will, from whom everything has come, and by whom everything is sustained: who is immanent in the universe, and specially inhabits the human soul; who is directing everything to moral ends, and whose character can be summed up in love. That Jesus Christ came from God, and is in a sense peculiar to Him, the Son of God; that He has declared the character of God to the human race, has broken the power of sin, and is the point of union between God and man.

It is to fight the lower self at the base of our nature, to give the supreme place to the soul, to carry the cross of Christ in daily life and to keep His commandments of love, to forget one's self and to think of others, to serve instead of ruling, to give instead of taking, to suffer instead of resisting.

It is to hope that in the long battle between right and wrong, right will conquer, that the things apparently evil are making for good, that the agony of suffering will end in the blessing of holiness, that God is working everything up into something better in this world and that which is to come, and that humanity will one day be raised to the perfection of Christ.

Faith, Hope, and Charity: without the faith there can neither be the charity nor the hope; without the charity the faith is not living; without the hope the charity is not crowned. The charity proves the faith and creates the hope—the greatest of these is charity. He who loves is therefore most surely a Christian.

DR. JOHN WATSON (IAN MACLAREN).

CHAPTER THIRD

What is Christianity ?



IT is hardly more than ten years ago since there met in a Western city the first World's Parliament of Religions. Thither came princes from India; scholars from China; priests from Russia; bishops from Africa; and prophets from every European and American country. In that assembly the scholars were met from the ends of the earth; there was gathered the very flower of the world's faith. Their many-colored garb reminded one of the streets of Cairo. Their multifold speech made one think of Babel. Every man not only, as at Pentecost, "heard them speaking in his own language," but also in the religious faith in which he was born. Every great religion had sent its prophet, and from his lips we heard his religion proclaimed and reasons given for

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the faith that was in him. It was the most notable gathering in modern history.

The influence of that gathering was cumulative. As the days went on, the crowds grew, the interest deepened, until a subduing reverence, like a cloud, hung over the place. We were thrilled, as we heard dusky priests, from the far-away Orient, tell us how God had spoken to His brown-faced children, and led them through their long and wonderful history. It seemed so good to know for a fact that God had left no nation without a witness of Himself. It made one's own religion seem all the nobler to realize that his revelation was only one—clearest, and most divine, if you please—but only one of God's messages to man. We discovered that the souls of men, whatever their faith or language, have a common speech. Wherever and whenever we speak of the God who "created the heavens and the earth," and "in whom we live and move and have our being," all men understand. I think the most impressive thing of all was the way they were received

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when the great Christian teachers set forth the gospel of the Crucified. There was no scoffing, as at Athens, when Paul spoke. No one cried out "Babbler!" It was beautiful, and it was impressive to see the courtesy, and the reverence, and the manifest respect with which men of every faith listened to the interpreters of Christianity. Those who stood by could but remember the charming picture of the Evangelist, showing us the Magi coming out of the heathen twilight with rich gifts to lay at the feet of the Son of Mary. One could only think of the time "when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father."

Christianity, then, is one of the religions of the world. We believe it to be the truest, and that it will be the universal religion of the world. But it is a religion of the world. That is something to hold fast to in this day. So many men there are who conceive of it as a form or ceremony. So many think of it as a philosophy to be defined and defended.

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Still others, like Renan, poetize and praise it as a beautiful and pious dream. A growing number have stripped it of everything supernatural, and proclaimed it as a splendid scheme of morality—"morality touched by emotion." There are prophets, everywhere among the plain people, who are preaching Christianity as a programme for economic life. "The multitudes," they tell us, "no longer go to church. They have deserted the preacher. They have no interest in the other world and in the spiritual life. The present problem of bread and butter is all there is to existence. The earth has no sky; man has no spiritual interest. Jesus was a labor leader. Paul was the first walking delegate. The first Christians were communists. Christianity is a sociology."

Now we will never get on in understanding Christianity unless, at the very start, we see that it is not a ceremony to be performed, nor a creed to be said, nor mere moralities to be observed, nor an economic scheme for the poor, who desire their rich brothers to divide

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their inheritance with them. Christianity may have in it all these things. It does touch life at all these points; but Christianity is not a programme. It is not a panacea. Christianity is a religion. And religion we have already defined as relationship. Religion is a relationship between a personal being, called God, and a personal being, called man, and their life growing out of this relationship. Christianity is a religion.

Moreover, Christianity is the religion taught, and lived, and incarnated by Jesus Christ.

Paul was the first great Apostle of Christianity; but everything that Paul taught was not Christianity. The wheat was with the chaff; the brass was mixed with clay. Paul's teaching about the origin of physical death and his definition of Christ's death have been overworked. The fact of sin, the fact of the Divine sacrifice—these are parts of Christianity. But Paul's explanation is not Christianity. Christianity, as Jesus taught it, had nothing to say about the origin of sin, and had no theory of the atonement. I will be

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instructed by Paul, but I will not be governed by him.

John Calvin was law-giver at a new birth hour of the Christian church. Without his divine gift of definition, the Reformation had perished. His is a name to conjure with in Christian history. John Calvin proclaimed Christianity; but all John Calvin said is not Christianity. He followed Christ, but he followed Him in the footsteps of Augustine, and interwove some of his human master's fatalism with his Divine Master's message. Election may be true or not, but it is not Christianity according to Christ.

John Wesley came at a very critical and desperate hour for the world. The eighteenth century was England's "conscienceless time." As the historian says, "There was no brightness in the past and no promise in the future; religiously it looked not like the morning, but like the evening of the world." A Frenchman said, "There is no religion in England; not more than four or five members of the House of Commons attend church. The

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churches and cathedrals are empty." The Dean of St. Patrick's, in Dublin, preached one Sunday to only the sexton, and the subject of his sermon was, "Be a good man, John, and be a Tory." In that day a wag defined religion after this manner: "Religion, if you seek it, you won't find it; if you find it, you won't know it; if you know it, you haven't got it; if you have it, you cannot lose it; if you lose it, you never had it." It was in this dull, dead time that John Wesley came preaching a living gospel. He gathered the working classes of England, who were organizing revolution, and preached unto them the wonderful love of God until their hearts melted, tears of penitence rolled down their cheeks, and they cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" He made them see that Christ could save all men from their sins, and that when Christ saved a man from his sins, he would know it. That was the movement, Green tells us, which saved England from worse than a French revolution. Dr. Herrick pronounces John Wesley "the

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finest illustration of consecrated, unselfish, whole-hearted devotion that the church of Christ has ever offered to the vision of man, perhaps of angels."

John Wesley preached Christianity, but everything that John Wesley said was not Christianity. We believe in the new birth, but we do not believe that every man remembers his own birthday. We believe in the witness of the Spirit, but we do not believe that the Spirit of God always speaks with tongues, or that the divine approval is witnessed only in the storm and whirlwind. Wesleyanism magnified the doctrine of experience in religion until it ran into the teaching of Hume and his sensational philosophy. Like Hume, the Methodists were soon ready to say "that they would not believe anything unless they could see it, or hear it, or touch it, or feel it." The Quakers have taught us better, as they sit listening for the still small voice. The prophet has taught us better, for he tells us that God was not in the whirlwind. Jesus Himself has taught us better, for He has

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said about the laws of the Spirit, "You cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." All these great prophets have taught the world Christianity, but Christianity is not Calvinism; it is not Wesleyanism; Christianity is Christ. If you want to know what Christianity is, ask Him. He is the only Master.

*"Hushed be the noise and the strife of the schools,
Volume and pamphlet, sermon and speech,
The lips of the wise and the prattle of fools;
Let the Son of Man teach!"*

*"Bewildered, dejected, and prone to despair,
To Him, as at first, do we turn and beseech:
'Our ears are all open! Give heed to our prayer!
O Son of Man, teach!'"*

Religion is the personal relationship between God and man. The Christian religion is the relationship between God and man as taught and revealed by Jesus Christ. What is the relationship between God and man which Jesus declares? When we have answered that question, we know the answer to the question, "What is Christianity?"

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According to Christ, then, what is the relation of man and God?

Various relationships are possible between personal beings, and my relationship to another determines my duty to him, my privilege and my obligation.

He may be my blood-thirsty, cruel, and powerful enemy—then my duty becomes one of self-protection and circumvention. Some religions have taught that God is mankind's implacable foe. The old classic epics are full of man's schemes and devices to thwart the enmity of the gods. The sacrifices they offered were hush-money and blackmail to buy off the anger of malignant deities.

He may be a tyrannical king, and I may be his subject. He may be Nero, and I may be Paul. Then I am the creature of his despotic will. I am beaten with rods; I am in peril of prison, and exile, and torture. His great mission is to make laws and execute them. His government is a great enginery for justice and vengeance. If I please Him, I am unmolested; but if I offend Him, I become the

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creature of His anger. This is the idea of God which has run through all history, and which entirely held the field in ancient theology. Living things were killed and sacrificed to propitiate Him. Inquisitions were established to exalt His power and to drive out heresy. This conception is the basis of the Roman Catholic Church, with its hierarchy, and its priests holding the keys of heaven and hell. It has come into our theology, and we have sung about the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We have even described the pathos of Gethsemane and the martyrdom of Calvary in the speech of the court and prison-house. We have sometimes said that Jesus Christ was the scape-goat of the people—punished in their stead. We have sometimes represented God as slaying Him for the fulfilment of His justice; and then when justice was satisfied, forgiving erring man.

Sometimes the Christian church has taught that some men may become the children of God. It is not kinship, but adoption. Some-

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times they have said God elects certain men to salvation, and all other men to damnation. Sometimes they have said that God loves good men and hates wicked men. Sometimes they have said that we become children of God by adoption, if we are converted, and all other men are castaways. But an adopted child is never a real child. If we believe that, it is no wonder our Father's house is never quite our home, and we are never really sure of His affection.

Enemies, subjects, elected favorites, adopted children—all these are possible relationships between God and man, and any one of these relationships would be a religion. But none of these would be the religion of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ never taught men that God was their enemy. Jesus never taught men that God was their king. He never said that some men are chosen to be the favorites and the rest passed by. He never preached that men by nature are the children of wrath, and that they can only become the children of God by adoption.

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There is a greater and deeper relationship between personal beings than any of these. The soul would wither and droop and die, if it fed only on fear and hate. The spiritual man would be a slave forever, if he were only a subject of Nero. I want love. I hunger for a friend. My father is dearer to me than a foster-father could be. The closest, deepest, dearest, divinest relationship possible between two personal beings is the relationship of parent and child. There is where Jesus starts. There you have the definition of Christianity according to Christ. God is the father of men and not the king of men. He is the father of all men and not merely of the favored man, or the good man, or the converted man. Religion is man's blood kinship to the Infinite, and the life that grows up and out of this relationship of father and child. The Christian religion is the filial life of the human soul.

This is the truth for which the ages waited. In it lies solution for life's mysteries.

Sometimes you and I may have arrived in

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a foreign town at midnight. We had to inquire, "What place is this?" Every scene was new; the language was strange. We asked of a fellow-traveller the way. He did not know. The stars shone—but they were dim and far away. We procured a guide, and he had a lantern, but his light went out and he led us astray. How crooked the streets! How confusing the distances! It was cold and we were weary. We had come for beauty and wonder—all was blank darkness. We expected friends—there were none to call us by name. We stumbled into a hotel; we huddled into a room. There was only hardship and confusion and mystery. Then the sun rose. We saw all the way we had come. We saw a hundred places of interest. We found friends, and they took us to their home. We entered cathedrals, and bowed our heads in reverence. We stood before pictures, and they set our hearts on fire. We were awed by the mystery of the mountains as by the touch of God. It was Paradise.

When Christ came the sun rose—"the light

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of the world." It had been night—only a few stars were in the sky, and they were all flickering and pale. Blind guides had led us into the ditch. But now it is noonday everywhere. Ignorance, like a fog, lifts, and the shadows flee away, like clouds before the wind, and the darkness disappears.

We know who and where we are—we are our Father's children in our Father's house. A thousand puzzles are unravelled and a thousand foolish fears are gone. Children are always afraid of the dark, and men ever fear what they do not understand.

Our mothers taught us to pray when they taught us to speak. Some say it was a nursery tale. We look abroad and behold all the children in ignorant and pagan lands strive after worship. Some sneer at the prayer-wheel, and the rosary, and the lighted taper, and say, "It is all superstition." But it all becomes noble, and lofty, and holy, if God is our Father. Shall not the child climb up into his parent's arms and cry, and sob, or chatter out his hopes and fears, if he has not

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yet learned a better speech? Prayer is the human child talking to his Divine Father. I want to learn that language.

In every land there are sacred shrines set up, and every one is a Mecca for a pilgrim host. There are holy days, whereon men put off the garments of their toil, and reverently turn to the temple. Men there are whom we count holy, and we await their blessings in all life's deepest hours. Books there are named sacred, and when we read them our hearts burn, and we spring to our feet as those for whom God hath sent. Is it all a doubtful myth and an unreasonable faith? If God is our Father, it is reality. Fathers always speak to their children, in word, or sign, or in inarticulate cry. Their communication is always adapted to the ability of the child to understand. Revelation, then, is the Divine Father talking to His human child. I want to learn to understand this heavenly speech.

Sorrow, like a storm-cloud, gathers in every man's horizon. When its pent-up fury breaks, "a thousand fall at my side and ten thou-

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sand at my right hand." Not only evil men are smitten, red-handed in their crime, but the innocent and the good also. The moans of the sweet babe break my heart, because I am powerless to stop its pain. The gentle woman, when she becomes high priestess of humanity, and enters unseen holies to return, like Mary, bearing a babe upon her breast, is crucified. Job was a good man—all the world being judge—and yet troubles break and "tear him like wolves after travellers lost in the mountains." Is there any meaning in the tangled maze of things? Men have suffered and fought and blasphemed even in this name—but all in vain. They seemed to be in the grip of a dangerous sea, and there was none to throw a life-line.

Nay! Christ has come. Hear His word. "One is your Father in heaven." The mystery is still there, but it has its teeth drawn. The cloud still hangs in the horizon, but hope, like a star, shines in its heart. Even fathers cannot give us paths where there are only flowers. And even in childhood all days

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are not holidays, and all sounds are not laughter. Grief hath its music. Discipline exacts its penalty. Endurance stands over against enjoyment. The lessons of life are learned sometimes only from stern masters. The bitter is as good for us as the sweet. I can never know the wine of joy until I have sipped the cup of sorrow. I do not know the explanation of it all, and I do not know the meaning of it all, but I dare not criticise my father's school. I trust him and I am not afraid.

Some day Death will come to my house. The philosophers call him cruel. The poets paint him monster. Like the wild Indians of the plains, he respects neither sex nor condition. He has pity neither for childhood nor old age. I think about him in the night when I hear my child cough. I could go out and meet him, but I am afraid he will lay hands on my loved ones, and I cannot give them over to the destroyer. Then Jesus Christ comes, and all weeping as He speaks, for pity of my grief, says, "In my Father's house are many

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mansions. You only know one, and the storms break in there. This climate was too harsh for your child, and God hath taken him into the Eternal summer land." Death hath changed his countenance. The death-dealing trireme has turned into a convoy of love, sent to take the lonesome and the weary and the worn out home.

*"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."*

Christianity is interpreter not only of man's world, but of man himself.

Christianity deals with three personal beings—God, man, and man's fellow; and its names for them are—Father, Child, and Brother. The divine sonship of man involves human brotherhood. Read the story of the Prodigal Son and the story of the Good Samaritan—there you have the sum of both law and gospel.

To be a child of the Infinite—who knows what that means? Men have said it sometimes

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of a great man, whom, when he died, they have made saint or hero forever. Men have said it of kings, when they sought to defend their rule as the divine right. We have thought it sometimes of the poet, when he has filled us with heavenly harmonies, and showed us visions of loveliness unlawful for human eyes to look upon. Jesus Christ said, man, every man, is the child of the Infinite—bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit. What does it mean? Who can tell? I saw a brown bird sitting on the fence, and he looked like other birds. "I am the child of the clouds," cried the lark, and leaving behind forever life in the barn-yard, and the muck-heap, he soared away to roam in the wild fields of blue. As I gazed after him until he became a speck in the sky, I heard the poet say:

*"Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.*

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*“Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.*

*“Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know ;
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listen-
ing now.”*

The grain of corn seems of less value than a pebble, as it lies hidden in the cold ground. But, crying, “I am the child of the sun,” I saw it come singing out of its dark prison-house, and go on up to the tall tasselled creature of the upper air. The days fed it; the nights blessed it; the sun kissed it; the winds caressed it; and in late autumn, when nature brought forth the cloth of golden splendor to robe it in, I knew what it was to be the child of the sun.

“I am the child of God,” Jesus taught men to say. In that hour democracy was born.

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Men everywhere said, I will not be a slave of the mighty, if I am the child of the Almighty. With the gospel of Christ there came the rise of the common people. You cannot keep people low whose relationships are high. The American pioneers were the children of long centuries of English culture. They were turned loose in the primeval forest. They at once had their church and school, and within thirty years they had built their college in the wilderness. Give an artist in a dungeon a burnt stick and an hour of daylight, and he will make a picture. Give Homer only a crust to eat, and at night a bed with the kine; but give him a broken harp, and he will make such rich music that all Greece will be fired with ambition. Poesy is in his blood; and blood will tell.

What is it to be the child of God, then? Jesus, the village carpenter, was said to be Joseph's son. He was not Joseph's son. He was God's son; and His divinity could not be hidden in an artisan's task. His mother saw it, when she looked into His eyes as a child;

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it made her tremble. John saw it, when He came to His baptism, and men keeping silent, the very heavens cried out in witness. Long before the walk to Emmaus, the disciples had felt their hearts burn within them, as they talked with the Master. At length their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, "the Messiah, the Son of God." In that light shines the explanation of His wonderful life. He was on the earth, yet not of it. He was human, and yet He was more. He fought single-handed against Temptation, and there were left on Him no scars. No sin could stain Him with its slime; no poverty could distress Him; no sorrow could break Him. "Lowliest among the mighty, he was the mightiest among the lowly." His was the only perfect life the world has ever seen. "Son of God," men have said, for there is no higher name. And He never used His exaltation for His own crowning. He never made His virtue His luxury. He was always forsaking His high estate for the sake of the poor, and outcast, and the prodigal. And at last, when He had spent all

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for the sake of the erring, He spread His own body like a cloak on which humanity might walk over sin into righteousness. "Surely this man was the Son of God." He is our type, pattern, model, Master. He was what we may be. Paul said it when he bade us "attain unto the perfect man, unto the fullness of the stature of manhood in Jesus Christ."

We have erred. We have been satisfied with half the truth. We have preached Christ's divinity—this we ought to have done; but we have not practised His divinity—this we should not have left undone. He was not Joseph's son. He was not the village carpenter. No more are you the child of the world. No more are you an animal harnessed to bear burdens. Your ancestry reaches back into the Eternal. You are made for the highest. Angels await your coming. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard the glories that are prepared" for you. You have not known yourselves. You thought you were a carpenter—it is only for a little while. You

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thought you were weak—for the asking, twelve legions of angels would minister unto you. You have put yourself down as sinner—but you have an advocate with the Father. The Christian life is emancipation, manhood, stature, divinity!

Some of you saw Lincoln's emancipation of the slaves. I did not live then. But years after, when I was a child, there was still the shouting and singing. So long they had been bought and sold; so long they had been the prey of appetite, and passion, and greed, and hate; so long they had waited, and waiting, had seen their children die or dragged into that which was worse than death; so long they had prayed and wept—"How long, O Lord, how long?"

You people, in this generation, who have always lived in the North, cannot know what it meant. It was like the joy in heaven among the angels, when a sinner comes home. Old men, tears streaming down their faces, cried out, "Thank God, I can sleep in a free man's grave." Splendid young men said, "I now

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have a right to the fruit of my toil. I can become the possessor of property." Young men and women leaped to their feet and said, "At last we can learn, and we have a chance to become scholars." Old black mammies sobbing, crooning, praying, said, "The day of Jubilee has come! At last the world knows that the black folks have souls; and my children can marry, like white folks, and no longer have to mate as their fathers have done." The whole South-land was swept and rocked and tossed by one mighty billow of song. Even yet, I can hear their weird cadences rolling up—"The day of Jubilee has come!"

Christianity is emancipation. It strikes the shackles off the soul of man. It gives him a seat among the mighty. It unbars all privileges, and culture, and opportunity. It inducts him into a new world, with new possibilities, and new horizons, and new visions. The human has become divine.

Here was the tragedy of the human emancipation of the negro—it was only a proclama-

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tion and nothing more, and it failed. The slave received the right to be a free man, but he had not the power. The gates were opened and he saw into the promised land, but he was so lame that he could not walk there, and there was none to carry him. If Christianity was nothing more than a proclamation, published to the world, we would of all men be the most miserable. What good is it for a starving man to see bread, if he is chained and cannot reach far enough to get it? What good is there for a man to be taken into a flower-garden, or a picture-gallery, if he is blind, and cannot see the beauty? What good is it for a man to be inducted into a home or a circle of friends, if his heart is dead and he cannot love, nor be loved? What advantage is it to tell me that I am the child of God, if I am chained fast to the earthly? But that isn't all there is of Christianity. Jesus Christ has not only published to the world man's right to be the Son of God, but Jesus Christ is the human life of God in the world, and unto as "many as received Him

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gave He the power to become the sons of God." Christianity is a divine force. It is a dynamic. It is the power of God unto salvation.

When I proclaim to you Christianity, I do not bring you a beautiful dream. I offer you strength to realize that dream. "You can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth you."

The little plant says, I cannot be that great stalk of corn, and give to the world in the autumn time a great lump of gold, called the ear. Then the sun comes and says, "Oh little plant, you cannot do it alone, but I will help you. My grace is sufficient for you." And corn and sun walk together, and when autumn comes, the harvest awaits the husbandman.

Here is the little child filled with wonder and confusion, as he hears the family speech with its thousands of words. The little child tries to talk, but his speech is only an inarticulate cry. He says, "It is no use, I never can talk like that." Then the mother comes and says,

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“ Oh little baby dear, you cannot talk if you are left entirely alone. Language is the voice of companionship. Isolation knows only silence. But I will help you, and my grace is sufficient for you.” And directly, the baby begins to master the long hard words, and all the house is filled with that music, which is sweeter than the music of harps, the voice of a baby’s prattle.

The ragged boy meets the great philosopher in the street. Marbles, and fish-hooks, and swimming-pools make up all of his world. The old philosopher shows him the road to scholarship, and culture, and the wide horizons of human thought. The lad shakes his head and says, “ It is not for me. I have tried to read, but I hate school; numbers are too much for me. I must be a blockhead.” And then the old master says, “ Oh boy, you cannot do this alone—how can man learn without a teacher? I will help you, I will take you to my house, I will make you my disciple, and I will pour all of my soul into your soul. My grace is sufficient for thee.” The boy

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pledges his life to the man's life, and the street urchin becomes a greater philosopher than his master. There they are, master and pupil, Socrates and Plato, walking arm in arm down the avenue of fame.

And you are saying, like the rich young ruler, "Son of God? Oh, I wish I might be! I have tried to keep the laws. I have observed the moralities. I have tried to practise the golden rule. But son of the Infinite—I cannot be. I have failed in the little moralities, I have tried, and how can I rise into the wide horizons?" And you shake your head and, like the rich young ruler, you turn away. Listen! Wait a little! Jesus Christ comes not only with the invitation, but He comes with the glad hand. Hear Him—"I know that by yourself you can do nothing. There is no light in the field except the sunshine out of the sky; there is no good in any man, except God takes up His abode in his heart. I will help you. I will be your friend. I will share my life with you, as you share your crust with your child. I will make you my disciple.

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Where you dwell I will dwell. I will not leave you nor forsake you, and my grace is sufficient for you. For as many as receive me, to them will I give the power to become the sons of God."

That was the pleading that touched the heart of the disciples long ago; and accepting it, they were lifted up to sit upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes. The music of that plea even subdued the heart of Judas, until for a long time his life said, "I will try." That divine voice surely cannot fall unheeding upon our ears. Some there are here, whom men love, and whom God loves, and who I pray to-day will say, "I will be as trustful as the little plant; I will be as simple-hearted as the little child; I will be as wise as Plato; I will accept that call; I will stretch out my hand and seize that pierced hand, which is reached down to me from the heart of the Infinite; and I will lift my life up to God. Born to be a prince, I refuse longer to be a slave in Egypt; and henceforth, by the grace of God, I will live a prince's life."

What is a Christian ?

A Christian is a man to whom Jesus Christ intrusts all his fellow-men ; nothing can be foreign to him which concerns any one of his brethren.

HENRI PERREYVE.

I heard this definition the other day of a Christian man by a cynic—"A Christian man is a man whose great aim in life is a selfish desire to save his own soul, who in order to do that, goes regularly to church, and whose supreme hope is to get to Heaven when he dies." This reminds one of Professor Huxley's examination paper in which the question was put—"What is a lobster." One student replied that a lobster was a red fish which moved backwards. The examiner noted that this was a very good answer, but for three things. In the first place, a lobster was not a fish ; second, it was not red ; and third, it did not move backwards. If there is anything that a Christian is not, it is one who has a selfish desire to save his own soul. The one thing which Christianity tries to extirpate from a man's nature is selfishness, even though it be the losing of his own soul.

There is only one great character in the world that can really draw out all that is best in men. He is so far above all others in influencing men for good that he stands alone. That man was the founder of Christianity. To be a Christian man is to have that character for our ideal in life, to live under its influence, to do what He would wish us to do, to live the kind of life He would have lived in our house, and had He our day's routine to go through. It would not, perhaps, alter the forms of our life, but it would alter the spirit and aims and motives of our life, and the Christian man is he who in that sense lives under the influences of Jesus Christ.

HENRY DRUMMOND.

CHAPTER FOURTH

What is a Christian ?



WORDS, like writers, are best understood when we know their story. There is light on Tennyson's poems when we know the poet's life. He was standing by Arthur Hallam's grave when he "faced his doubts and slew them." With that key unlock "In Memoriam," and it becomes a sacred Psalm.

Thomas Carlyle's favorite way of defining a word was to give its biography. Even we Americans, who have scant respect for royalty, despising the show and tinsel of it, are moved to reverence, when he shows us that the King is *König*—"the man who can"; the Duke is *Dux*—"the man who leads"; and the Prince is *Princeps*—"the man who is first to hold." Great names represent heroisms. No matter how, in an after time, they

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may be worn by shams and little folk, they stand for realities and giants. Counterfeit coin does not discredit gold; it bears witness to its worth. A good way to know words is to learn their biography.

I do not know any word, whose story men need to renew, more than the word Christian. It is always on our lips, and yet I am not sure that we know it very well. Anyway, it would refresh us to go back and stand by the fountain of its origin, and taste in the spring that river "that makes glad the city of God." We know Americanism, but it makes us strong, once a year anyhow, to go and stand by Plymouth Rock.

A living writer has written a widely read book called "The Christian." But when we read it through we say, "Where is the Christian?" John Storm was a Christian, doubtless, but it was "at a poor dying rate." We will never let John Storm stand for Christianity. He is not a Christian after the manner of Him who said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto myself."

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John Bunyan has drawn a famous picture. His Christian is worthy of its fame. But it would never do for the portrait of Jesus. Never could we think of Him who prayed for His disciples, "Not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil," as spending all his life to escape from the wicked world into the City Beautiful. For the Christian, as for Browning:

*"This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely and means
good."*

Yet Bunyan's conception has taken a large hold upon the mind of the church. I think there have been times when the church has taken more theology from Bunyan and Milton than from the teachings of Jesus. I know that when I was a child the preachers all described this world as a "City of Destruction." When they exhorted me to become a Christian, it was in order that I might go to heaven when I died. I understood Christian-

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ity to be a scheme, a device, a superior and high sort of life-saving service. I did not see anything in the Christian life to love. It only seemed to be a hard, and sad, and solemn necessity. Worldly life, as it was described to me, might be "naughty, but it was nice." But I had to become a Christian, as the farmers had to pay their taxes—and they never did that cheerfully. In order to become a Christian, I was taught that I must believe certain forms of hard and fast words. I did not disbelieve them; neither could I say that I believed them. I was afraid that hidden away in them were meanings I did not see. I simply did not understand. I was told that I must pass through a certain great crisis and have a certain definite kind of feeling. I could not be a Christian, until I had done that. They said I was not quite old enough for that; but they were never quite certain whether or not I was not so old, and so accountable, that if I died without that experience, I should be lost. I was very unhappy about it. Without knowing why, I rebelled against it all.

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It is all plain enough now. Those were good, earnest people, but narrow. They had mistaken John Bunyan's Christian's experience for all Christian experience. They mistook the particular for the general; the part for the whole. John Bunyan's Christian was a Christian; but he was not a typical Christian according to Him who said, "I am come that ye may have life and have it more abundantly."

Let us turn to the New Testament—

"And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Antioch was the second capital of Christianity. Indeed, it were well called the first capital of Christianity. Judea had been its cradle, and Jerusalem was well-nigh its grave. In that city was Pontius Pilate's judgment-seat; there was the High Priest's palace; "without the city walls was the green hill where our Lord was crucified." Christianity never blossomed amid such surroundings. It was here Ananias and Sapphira made the first scandal in the church. It was here that the fires of the first persecution

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were kindled, where Stephen fell, and the disciples were scattered. Here Christianity was little more than a sect. It was called "The Way." It was at Antioch that Christianity was born again. Here it burst the bands of Judaism, and became a world religion. Here the Gentiles came in. Here the Apostle Paul began his marvellous ministry. Here foreign missions were born.

Every now and again through the ages, Christianity has renewed its youth, and burst into some swift, sweeping enthusiasm. So it blossomed at Florence, when the Florentine Monk put the silver trumpet of the gospel to his lips, and blew a blast that shook the mediæval world. Such was the revival at Geneva, under John Calvin. Such was the revival, called the Reformation, under Martin Luther. But never has Christian revival surpassed the one at Antioch.

Antioch was a city of Greek culture. It was the home of the intellect. It also was the home of vice and pleasure and avarice. It would be hard to understand how this Jewish

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preacher moved the entire city, if we had not seen Europe shaken by Peter the Hermit; England shaken by John Wesley; Italy shaken by Savonarola. Given unto a man who knows how to play it, and who has divine harmonies in his own soul, the human heart is like a harp, when love lays hold and smites all the chords with might.

In our time we have seen such wonders. "Men do not care for sermons!" Come with me on a blustery, March day into Boston; a north-easter is blowing; the weather is so disagreeable that Mark Twain said, he reverently believed that the Almighty had made everything else in the world but the New England weather. When we walk around on Tremont Street by the Common, we find the street for blocks, jammed with a mass of men, all crowding into the dim silence of old St. Paul's. When at last the galleries, and aisles, and choir loft, and chancel are filled, and there is no more standing room left, the doors are closed, and those who have not gotten in go away. There is no fine music. There is sung

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a hymn. There is a short prayer. And then, a great, giant man climbs into the pulpit, and reads from a pocket New Testament his text. The hour is twelve o'clock at noon on busy Monday, and this scene is repeated every day during all the week. Only men are in that audience, and they are the busiest business men of Boston. What is the occasion of all this hubbub? Only this—a preacher is going to preach.

Then Phillips Brooks opens his lips, and heart, and vision, and for thirty minutes waves, tides, and floods of appeal, emotion, aspiration, roll, and eddy, and whirl until we seem to be tossed and borne away on the bosom of an impassioned sea. He is all subduing and irresistible. Before we know it, tears come down our cheeks, and the preacher seems to be down under us, lifting us heavenward. "Let us pray," he cries, and as out of a full heart the preacher talks to God, all heads are bowed. Lips say, "Our Father," which have not formed the words since childhood. Many from that hour date their con-

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version. When they come out into the street, it is as if they walked upon air. They have seen a new world; they have heard a new message; they have fallen in love with a new Master; they have been lifted up into a new hope.

So the multitudes in Antioch were carried away by a great Jewish preacher in the long ago. So the entire city was stirred and the regions round about. A new movement, like the fire from heaven, fell upon them, and under the spell of it they coined a new word—"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

It was not oratory that wrought the revolution in Antioch. "Enticing words of man's wisdom," on the part of the preacher, and "itching ears," on the part of the people, was not the secret with which he "turned the world upside down."

It was not oratory in Boston. Men forgot Phillips Brooks as soon as he began to preach. You could not see the man for the message. "Words are the smoke of thought."

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What was the message that blazed? No one who ever heard the Boston preacher will ever forget his one burning message—"Mankind are the children of God." "The intrinsic nobility and divinity of human life" were the words always on his lips. Paul's message was the same message—"Jesus, and Him crucified." The Divine dwells in the human. It was the message pictured by Jesus Christ in the Prodigal Son. We have been familiar with its words ever since childhood, but in spite of familiarity, we can never sleep under its music.

I remember very well hearing some men tell how they acted in one of the Southern prisons, where for months they had starved, and suffered, and where many had died, and for the rest, life had been worse than death, when one day they heard the sound of a bugle. At first it was faint and interrupted, and then it grew clearer and nearer, and the message it rang out was "The Northern army is coming to set you free!" Men danced and shouted for happiness. Those who were

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marked with death put off their dying, and with one mighty effort staggered to their feet. It was a delirium of rejoicing. Men cried for joy. "We will not die in the prison pen, we are going home," they shouted.

Somewhat like that was the scene in Antioch, and it is always seen when the Christian gospel is proclaimed. For many of us are spirits in prison. The dreams of our childhood have faded like the stars in the morning sky. The innocence of our youth has passed away in life's fierce heat, like the morning dew from off the grass. We have had our fling and we have failed. We are in captivity to desire or appetite. We are sore and wounded. One wing is clipped and we cannot soar. Men have lost faith in our goodness; and sometimes we have lost faith in ourselves. We stand ready to excuse our sins, saying, "It is my nature: my father was a drunkard. Man is one-half brute anyhow."

And then the Christian gospel comes and says, "You are spirit and related to the Infinite God. His name is love, for it is His

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nature. You are related to Him as is the little child in your home related to you—bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, blood of His blood, nature of His nature.

You may be amazed by the statement, but do not mistake it. That saying, “father and child,” their mutual love, their trust, their hopes, their likeness, all that is the language of your own fireside. All that is the gospel of the Christian religion. And the man who tries to live that filial life of the soul, and allows the Divine Father to help him live that life, that man is a Christian man.

The child cannot do without the father.

Even after he has grown to man's estate, he cannot do without the father. Even after we are men grown, and our fathers die and leave us, the world seems lonesome. We pity the orphan, not so much for his grief, as because he has lost something out of his life, which he can never find.

Jesus describes a young man, who thought he could do without his father, and who took all his goods and went into a far country.

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“ There arose a mighty famine in that land ; and he began to be in want.” At last he lived with the swine and dined with them. Whenever a man tries to live without God, there always comes a famine in the house. Even if the crops had not failed, even if work had not been scarce, the young man, who had turned his back upon his home relationship, would have been hungry anyhow. Any soul, living outside of this filial relationship of God, is a dissatisfied and starving soul.

We have never read that parable of Jesus well. We have saved it for the Sunday we preached in the County Jail, and waved it above the head of our neighbor’s reprobate boy, or called it “ glad tidings ” for the slums. We have never applied it to ourselves. We have supposed that the prodigals always have ragged clothes ; that they all consort with harlots and are riotous. Any man and every man, in slum or boulevard, who does not act as a part of God’s family, is a starving man. I know people who think they are good livers and are starving to death. They

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feed on the carob-pods of worldliness; but these things will not sustain life. Made for God, their souls cannot live on less. Neither money, nor fame, nor pleasure can bring peace to the human heart. We are made for God, as we are made for bread, and for knowledge, and for love, and without God we die. The child cannot do without the father. The father cannot do without the child.

What is the palace which he has built, if his loved one is ragged and hungry, or lost in a distant and dangerous land? Preachers have not said much about it, but God cannot do without His children. Fathers and mothers have a heart hunger, even when their children grow up and go out to places of trust and honor in the world. The old world is never the same. The mother's eye has lost a light, and a perpetual shadow is in her face. The father does not work as he used to—he has lost his aim. They are strangely silent and walk softly and haltingly and stop every now and then to listen—they are waiting for news.

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A man told me the other day that in his childhood he grew weary of home and ran away to sea. For ten years he was before the mast. He visited strange lands. He became coarse, and hard, and brutal. Never once in that time did he write home. At last sickness and heart hunger overtook him. He took ship for his native land. He sailed into the great port; he took a skiff and rowed across the arm of the bay to the little inlet where his childhood's home had stood. He wondered if they were dead. He was afraid they had forgotten him. He feared they had cast him unworthy out of their love forever. He did not dare draw near in daytime. He was ashamed to be seen. But when the shadows fell he rowed toward the old familiar landing. Someone was moving about with a light. He again put out to sea because he did not want to meet strangers, and evidently they were expecting somebody. At ten o'clock he rowed back again, but they were still there, and the light also. At eleven o'clock, when he rowed back, the light was there, and someone

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was trimming it, and when he drew near, lo! it was his old father, weary-eyed and gray, who had put that light there for a welcome sign to his long-lost son. Not only that night, but for every night during all those ten years, he had set that lantern there to guide him home.

If the teachings of Jesus are true, God is like that. And though we may forget Him, or wander away, forever He doth yearn for us and wait for us to come home. In the windows of heaven He hath set a light to guide us home. For God is our father, and a father never forgets. The father cannot do without the child.

The child may find his father. That is why, once a year, you and I make a long journey that once more, for a few days, we may sit down by the old hearthstone and renew the ties of earthly affection. But space is not the only separation between souls. Estrangement is separation. Ingratitude and indifference are separations. Wrong-doing is a great gulf fixed. But we can bridge even that

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chasm. Have you never wronged your earthly father and been estranged from him, separated, it seemed, as far as the east is from the west? And then have you not been able, when you came to yourself, to go back again, or when you confessed your wrong, and when you showed your love, did not heart answer heart and did not love kindle love? That is the gospel of Christianity—not only that man is the child of God; not only that God loves His child; not only that man cannot do without God, and God cannot do without man, but every child may return to his father, and his father is on his way seeking his child. If you have gone away from God, turn around. If you are sorry, let the tears fall. If you have done wrong, say so. “With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Turn your face toward the Infinite; stretch out your hands to the Father’s outstretched hands. Take Him into your confidence; pour out your sorrow and listen to His counsel. Walk with Him; live with Him; love Him, and directly they who look upon you will say,

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even as they who see children become men, "Like Father, like son." At last we grow to resemble those who are akin to us and with whom we live.

The Christian gospel is more than a message—it is a manifestation. It speaks not only to the ear, but it appeals to the eye. Those Greeks might have said to Paul, "It is a theory, a beautiful dream, the child of your hope." So Paul gave them demonstration—he preached "Jesus, and Him crucified." Jesus is Christianity in the concrete. Jesus Christ is the love of God made manifest.

Men there were in early Virginia who heard Patrick Henry deliver his thrilling message about liberty, and they remained unkindled. They could not understand all the wide sweep of it. But when they saw Washington, saying, "I will raise a thousand men, and equip them at my own expense, and march to Boston," gather his regiment, they went out and enlisted. Truth, spoken, interests us. Truth, incarnate, moves us. "Actions speak louder than words." Men heard the prophets say,

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“God is a father”; they heard Jesus say, “God is love.” They quibbled and wondered how it could be. Then there appeared a wondrous sight—Jesus having compassion on men and healing their disease. Jesus touching and taking little children in His arms to bless them. They saw Him look at Peter after he had denied Him thrice. They heard Him pray for His enemies and make excuse for their crimes. They saw Him sitting down to dine with the publican and the sinners. They saw Him deal with the soiled Magdalen and watched Him go to the cross and die for men who hated Him. They heard Him at last say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” and their hearts caught fire, and they knew for a fact

*“The love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.”*

To be a Christian, then, is to receive a new Master. You say, “I love Christ, but I can-

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not join myself to Him because I do not understand Him. I do not know about this Virgin birth. I do not see how miracles can be true." Peter did not see or know at first. Jesus would be no Christ, if you could know all about Him before you trusted Him. When you were a child you knew nothing about the mysteries of motherhood. You do not know much yet, but from a child you have let your mother mother you. When you went to study electricity with Thomas Edison, you could not see how he could do such wonders. If you had known, there had been no need of the master. You call a man master because of the part you do not understand. You expect him to be able to do things that you cannot do. If you come to enroll in a school, nobody wants to know what you think about the teachers. These are the questions for entrance—"Do you want to know?" "Will you try?" "Will you obey?" "Will you trust your teacher and follow him?"

When you come to church, you do not need to give your definition of the nature of

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Christ, or your attitude on the miracles. These things may be interesting, but they are not fundamental. Will you be His disciple and trust Him and obey Him and follow Him? Will you take His strength for your weakness, His knowledge for your ignorance, His grace for your frailty? Will you strive to be like Him and let Him help you to strive? In the beginning Apostleship was discipleship. In the beginning the seer was in the kindergarten. In the beginning the millionaire had only pennies in the bank. If you are going to be a Christian, then in the beginning you are to be the scholar of the Lord Christ. Knowledge will come, wisdom will come, vision will come. You will reach high altitudes, but you must start where you are. The little plant cannot bloom all by itself, but it can yield itself to the touch of the sun and the sun can make it bud and blossom. You cannot know all the mysteries, but you can yield yourself to Jesus Christ, and He will manifest God unto you.

In a famous passage, the greatest preacher

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of our time, Henry Ward Beecher, tells us how he discovered God in Christ:

“When I found that when His disciples did wrong, He drew them closer to Him than He did before; and when pride and jealousy and rivalry and all vulgar and worldly feelings rankled in their bosoms, He opened His heart to them to heal all their infirmities; when I found that it was Christ's nature to lift men out of weakness to strength, out of impurity to goodness, I felt that I had found God. I shall never forget the feelings with which I walked forth that May morning. The golden pavements will never feel to my feet as then the grass to them; and the singing of the birds in the woods—for I roamed in the woods—was cacophonous to the sweet music of my thoughts; and there were no forms in the universe which seemed to me graceful enough to represent the Being, a conception of whose character had just dawned on my mind. I felt, when I had with the Psalmist called upon the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the streams, the floods,

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the birds, the beasts, and universal being to praise God, that I had called upon nothing that could praise Him enough for the revelation of such a nature as that in the Lord Jesus Christ." Afterward the full glory of the Divinity was revealed. We hear him say: "All that there is of God to me is bound up in that name. But Christ stands my manifest God. All that I know is of Him and in Him. I put my soul into His arms as, when I was born, my father put me into my mother's arms. I draw all my life from Him. I bear Him in my thoughts hourly, as I humbly believe that He also bears me. For I do truly believe that we love each other!— I, a speck, a particle, a nothing, only a mere beginning of something that is gloriously yet to be when the warmth of God's bosom shall have been a summer for my growth—and He, the Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!"

In the end, then, the Christian finds in Christ the glory and the love and the wonder of

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God. But in the beginning, to be a Christian is to be a disciple of the Master.

But men hesitate. They are afraid of the high altitudes. The heights seem dizzy. Suppose they should try to walk there and fall. Judas fell. Peter fell. So, like the rich young ruler, there are many who admire and then hesitate. They are afraid to try. I count it a gain that men have so high regard for the Christian life. But the man who hesitates between his ideal and his fear is already lost. That is the tragedy of the young man whom Jesus loved.

Everything that is noble is high. Scholarship is high. "It is high—I cannot attain unto it," are the first words of the ignorant boy when he looks up to the heights where the scholars dwell. Then fear gives place to wisdom, and we hear him mutter, "It is in me; for that I am come and to that end was I born." And teachers lead him on. Fatherhood is high—there never was a strong man who was not afraid of his babe. But whispering, "The Lord has sent him," he takes the

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tiny life into his keeping and love leads him on. Friendship is high; music is high; oratory is high; business is high and hard. No one of us can succeed in any of these things except we were made for them and except we receive help.

Modern civilization is a "Lend a Hand Society." We lend a hand to the child as it starts to walk. We lend a hand to the young man as he starts in business. Everybody lends a willing hand to the bride making her home, and to the mother nestling her first-born. We lend a hand to the poor, to the sick, and to the outcast. "The strong bear the infirmities of the weak." Our greatest men serve. The giants are gentle. Why? It did not used to be so. The old-time heroes were Hercules, with giant arm and wooden club; Ulysses, crafty, cruel, and cunning; Alexander, who died of a broken heart because there were no more nations to crush and no more people whose liberties he could take away. What has brought about the change? I will tell you, Jesus of Nazareth

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has been in the world and He has showed us a better way. He has made manifest the Divine way—it is to bear one another's burdens. So the modern world is becoming a "Lend a Hand Society."

Now, my friends, we can never too much emphasize this deepest thing about Christianity. It is "glad tidings"—"Mankind are the children of God." It does give us the sweetest and gentlest of Masters—"Man never spake like this man." But Christianity is more than good news. Jesus Christ is more than friend and teacher. A friend may be found who will lay down his life for his friend, but God commendeth His love to us in this, "that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The fathers did wisely to make much of Calvary. God is the suffering, succoring Father. The cross is the symbol of God's perpetual heartbreak over His wandering boy. What Christ did in Judea, the Father does everywhere. What Christ did for three years, the Father does in all years. As Christ was with the twelve disciples, strength

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for their weakness, courage for their fear, faith for their doubt, pardon for their sin, He is with all His disciples. Christianity is God's "Lend a Hand Society."

You can lead this Christian life because "you can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth you." That is the Christian message. It is not the Ten Commandments. It is not the Two Commandments. It is not a programme of ethics. It is not a dream of a golden age. It is the strength of God revealed in human life, redeeming it and transfiguring it. "It is the power of God unto Salvation." This is the Christian man's cry, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against the great day." This is the Christian man's cry, "I know Him who is able to prevent me from falling and present me faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy." The Christian life is a life lived on the Divine pattern, guaranteed and vouched for by the power of God.

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Jesus describes a young man, who has wasted his life, turning about and starting for his home. He calls him the Prodigal Son. He describes the reception by his father, who has grown weary-eyed with watching. It is His picture of the Heavenly Father. He shows us the elder brother in his petulance and his bigotry, refusing to rejoice that the lost had been found. It is His portrait of the Pharisees of that time and all times.

You and I have imagined all the discouragements the young man had, as he was about to start out upon his journey, and the bad advice he received. The Epicure laughed at him and said, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow you die." The Materialist said, "Mind your business. Do not go out in search of a dream. Your notion of finding your father's house is like finding a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. It is all a childish dream. Stick to your money-getting. Money makes the world wag." And then the Philosopher came to him and assured him that if he had a father, he could not find

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him; and if he had a home he could not find it. I think that young man was more sorely beset by his friends than was Job.

But I wonder if we have thought about his encouragements—the inspirations that led him on. There was the encouragement within himself—he knew that he belonged at home. At times his father's blood ran hot in his veins. Then he had fitful memories of the house where he was born, and all that glorious time “when heaven lay all about him in his infancy.” And he had other encouragements—I am sure he had heard from home.

The other day I heard the story of a Prodigal. He had been away a long time. He had written no letters and he had read none. He drifted to the city and then to the plains. He mingled with the coarse life in the mines. The marks of his dissipation were written all over him. At last in sheer desperation he enlisted with the army. The Spanish war came. He was wounded, and then fever set in, and for days he lingered upon the borderland, not knowing whether he would stay or go.

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His Vermont mother found out his condition, and where he was, and she sent him letters, blotched with tears and throbbing with love. She asked him to come home and they would forget the past. They would live for the future. Not satisfied with this, she sent a messenger all the way to Florida. The messenger sat by the side of his cot and described the old home, until there were tears in his eyes, and told him about his mother's love and long watching for his return, until there was a lump in his throat. She brought him a box from home, and in it were apples that grew in the old orchard, and cookies that his mother had made, and jelly which she had put in the glass with her own hands. Then one day the train came, and straight from the train to the hospital came a woman whose face was deeply graven with the literature of sorrow. With a cry she sprang to her son, and, as they wept together, he poured out all the sorrow and the shame of his life, and his contrition, and she put her arms about him and hugged him tighter to

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her heart and smoothed his face, and said, "Now there! now there! let us forget it! I have come to take you home." Do you think it is any wonder that that wounded boy heard the overtures of love and forgiveness and went back to the Vermont homestead?

But hath not God sent to the Prodigal letters upon letters, filled with His sympathy, and throbbing with the affection of His great heart? Hath He not sent after him many messengers, and have they not cried with Isaiah, "Come, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"? Doth He not send to him blessings and benedictions and gifts, which are as grateful as the box from mother to the sick boy in the camp? And lo! at last doth there not come one whose form is like the form of the Son of Man? When He touched the diseases of men, have they not been healed? When they have sobbed out their sins upon his breast, have they not been forgiven? And ever afterwards have they not said, "like Abraham, I have been entertain-

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ing angels unawares ”; “ I have been found by the God whom I had forgotten ”? Is it any wonder that the young man went back home? The wonder had been if he had stayed in the strange land. The only amazement is that any man can remain away from His Father's house, and forego the Father's love and its over-arching care.

The Programme of the Christian
Life

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

ROMANS 12 : 1.

Not so shall it be among you : but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister ; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

MATTHEW 20 : 26-28.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world : for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee ? or athirst, and gave thee drink ?

And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

MATTHEW 25 : 31-46.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Programme of the Christian Life



WORDS, like people, are alive. Neglect them, and they will die. Honor them, and they will unfold into richness. It is no wonder that Henry Van Dyke, as he bends over his writing, prays, "Help me to deal honestly with words and people, for both are alive." Words, like men, grow deeper with age and larger with experience. Many a word, harsh or heartless in youth, has become wondrously tender in old age. "Spirit" was once but a passing wind with icy breath. "Spirit," grown old, has become religious, and represents for us the tender touch of God.

Words are cups in which truth is measured, and when they grow larger our truth becomes

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more. "Patriotism" became a new word after Washington. "Freedom" grew tenfold richer after Lincoln. "Love," we never know love even from our parents. It is not until we have children growing that we know for a fact that "love never faileth." So words grow as they age, and widen, and deepen as they have experience, and advance in stature and wisdom. We should be sure that we treat words as living beings grown up, and do not try to thrust them back into the cradle of their infant meaning. We should recognize their full personality, and reverently allow them to declare all their message.

I know of nothing more fascinating than this study of words, and the necessity of, every now and then, getting acquainted with them all over again.

So we have made a new study of the old words, "Religion," "Christianity," and "Christian." Over this last word I want to linger another hour.

Of a Christian there have been many celebrated definitions. There is the famous one of

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John Bunyan, which we all love because of its picture of escape from sin, but which we find fault with because it has no salvation of the world from sin. For ages we have been touched by the Christian life as described by Thomas à Kempis. There is about it mystical vision, and reverence, and adoration, which in our time we would do well to remember. But it does not express all that we mean by the word Christian. It lacks action. It is almost negative, like so many of our hymns, which seem to teach that the Christian life is "to sit and sing one's self away to everlasting bliss." There is something left out. That absent quality for us is better expressed by the practical James, who teaches us that "pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

After all, Paul knew the Western world better than James did, for did he not sail upon Western seas and preach in European capitals? He seems to have caught the very tem-

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per of the Western mind when he said, "I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It is Paul's portrait of a Christian. It is a noble portraiture; its lines are fit to limn the Master's face. And as we study it, we see that a Christian man is a man who does more than other men. A Christian is a Christ. A Christian life is life with a programme.

Indeed, it seems to us that Jesus so taught and lived. Did He not represent the Kingdom of God by "leaven," which comes from the same word as "lever," and means to raise up and elevate? Did He not call a Christian man "the light of the world"? And light is positive, creative, life-giving. He likens His disciples unto salt, and salt rescues from corruption. What, after all, saves this world from becoming utterly rotten and corrupt but the Christian life in it? Matthew Arnold says, "Show me a spot ten miles square in any part of the world where Christianity has not gone, in which the life of men and the honor of

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women and children are safe, and I will give up Christianity." There is no such outside spot. The Christian is the world's saviour. More and more do we define the Christian as a man with a programme.

The first word of the Christian programme is Service.

Religion has been overmuch in the passive. Going to the utmost limit of our strength on week days, on the seventh morning we have said, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber." Sunday was our rest day, and church was our rest cure. Too often ministers have lived in a cloister, and if outside of it they have been "in the world, but not of it." The pew has been too generally an absorbent. In the Roman Church the priests talked for them, and in the Protestant Church the ministers talked to them. In both places religion was all talk, and all the pew had to do was to listen. The church has been drowsy from overeating and lack of exercise.

It was not so in the early church. Then every man was a worker, and whenever, through all

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Christian history, the laymen have set to work, the church has gone forward like an army with banners. John Wesley saved England from disaster when he sent out his lay-preachers into English highways and byways. All the modern movements, like the Young Men's Christian Association, and the young people's activities, and the missionary movements, have come about when laymen have become workers. A Christian life has too often been a life with an experience—one single experience in the past which is told over and over again. The Christian life has too often been a life with a doxy—words falling trippingly from the tongue, but they were words from which the life had gone out.

But life is not life until it is in action. The Christian life is a life with a programme. Paul calls it "a living sacrifice." Jesus taught it when He said, "He who would be great among you let him be the servant of all." And in His picture of the final judgment, He gave the crown of life to those who had served God's little ones. These teachings seemed

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foolishness to His disciples. All the world has supposed that the idle man was the gentleman. Jesus has shown us that only to him who serves is given the crown. Even the kings of the earth have set themselves and have taken counsel together how they may serve. The motto of one royal house is "Ich Dien"—"I serve." There is no harder worked man in Europe than Emperor William. If Germany were to become a Republic to-morrow, William would not be long without a job. He could become a captain of industry. God is the first great worker. Jesus was a worker with hands and brains and heart. The Christian man must be a worker. Service is the pathway to glory.

Let the church make much of worship. Let her spire fling itself high against the sky. Let art lend to the temple the language of beauty. Let choirs chant and organs, deep-toned, praise. Let eloquence smite her lyre. Teach all the multitudes to soar on wings of aspiration. Open the gates and let them see all mysteries. Make much of worship, but in God's name for-

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get not work. Service, Christlike service, is the programme of the Christian life.

The second word on the programme is "Holy." It is a holy service. Holy does not mean ragged and dirty, as the monk thought. Holy does not mean sanctimoniousness and piosity, as men have sometimes thought. Holy does not refer solely to altars, and holy days, and ceremonies, as the world has too often thought, when, as Ruskin says, "you build your churches Gothic, but you do not build your homes, or business houses, Gothic." Out of this has come all that hateful and baneful division of life into the sacred and secular, wherein men worship God on one day in the seven, and worship the "Goddess-of-getting-on" all other days.

Holy means reserved, set apart, sacred. The cup in the temple is "holy." The bunch of grapes chosen for sacrifice while yet unripe, because of its perfection, is "holy." The boy given by his parents, while yet a babe, to the ministry, is "holy."

In all our cities and towns one sees picked

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young men, occupied with ordinary business all day, meet together in the evening for study and for drill. In that hour they wear a uniform; they hold themselves ready for action; at a minute's call they will fall into regiments and be on their way to the field or the riot. We call them our National Guard. They are set apart men; they are "holy men."

Every now and then we see a fireman's parade. It is a splendid body. Many of the men work at their trades or craft, only they are ready for emergencies; they are trained. At the sound of a bell they become soldiers against the flames. They are set apart. They are "holy men." That is Paul's idea of a Christian man—a trained man; a ready man; a minuteman. In any and every call where truth and right are in danger, he is to spring into the thick of the fight. Like the knight of old, he is to ride abroad "redressing human wrong." The cry of a woman in distress, or a little child, or of hunger, or sorrow, or of shame, will thrill him like a trumpet's blast. He is a picked man. We can count on his vote;

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on his voice; on his prayer; on his service; on his loyalty to Christ and Christian things. Wherever duty calls, and conscience calls, and humanity calls, and God calls there is no faltering—he will fall into his place.

*“Forward the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismayed?
No, though the soldiers knew
Someone had blundered:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of death
Rode the Six Hundred!”*

So men followed the flag. So men died for the Queen. So shall we not follow the Christ? So shall we not live for the King?

The programme goes on. The Christian life is service “acceptable unto God”—“dedicated unto God” is the way we would express it. Is there anything modern life needs so much as this dedication unto the Divine?

Our city—its supreme need is not better streets, and more factories, and finer homes,

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but men for citizens and rulers whose God is the Lord. Men there are all about us, whose lives are dedicated to gain, and ambition, and commerce, and learning; but “they who build the city labor in vain except the Lord build it.”

Our country—have we not heard a statesman in our own time declare that “the purification of politics is an iridescent dream and the Decalogue has no place in a political platform”? The crying need of the hour, and for our political life, is for men like Benjamin Franklin, who in a company of lawmakers said, “The longer I live, the more clearly I see there is a God who governs in the affairs of nations as well as individuals.” And he made a motion that Congress should bow in prayer.

A man is a Christian in nothing unless he is a Christian in everything. Consecration is our name for some bowing of the head, or moment of silent prayer. Consecration! Cease to pray for it! There is no such thing! It is a mere word; and a word is a breath. Make it con-

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crete. Consecrate a hand; a voice; a pocket; a day—that is the Christian programme. Our fathers blazed the way. They said, “ God is so good, and it is so sweet to dwell in His house! Let us, in the middle of the week, take an hour from business, or pleasure, or rest, and let us give the hour wholly to God. We will pray, if He puts prayer in our hearts. We will sing, if our joy is set to music. We will speak, if there is a message given unto us. We will keep silent, if the command is, “ Be still, and know that I am God.” The prayer-meeting is a Feast of Dedication. Only a few Christians out of every church meet at that table. The others say, “ I pray thee, have me excused. I have married a wife; I have bought a farm; I have made an investment.” Others say, “ I do not enjoy the prayer-meeting—it is not entertaining.” Consecration does not ask to be paid. It does not think that duty should be sugar-coated. It does not expect to be tickled. Duty faithfully done always turns to privilege. Work is drudgery until it becomes art, and art is joy. Even before that time

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comes there is good in it. To be in our place at the mid-week service is going to drill. It is touching elbows with our fellows. When the battle comes, men left alone will run away; but if they touch elbows they will capture a battery. There is strength in numbers. There is fire in a bundle of sticks. Going to the prayer-meeting generates momentum. It creates *esprit du corps*. It organizes for victory. Wise is the Christian man who spends one hour in the week in consecration to God.

Our fathers were busy men. They did not travel as fast as we do, but they carried heavier loads. They subdued the forest, and tamed the wilderness, and laid the foundations of city, and school, and state. When Sunday came, they were just as weary as we are. When they were tempted to rest, they remembered that childhood is the strategic hour of all life. Destiny hinges on the first ten golden years. Then the young life is like clay in the hands of the potter. You can write on it what you like, and as it hardens, your message is indelible. So they organized their children and

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their neighbors' children into classes on Sunday, and taught them religion. Methods may change, but the Sunday-school lives on. It is more of a necessity than it used to be. For religion neglected has slipped away from the home, and she has been driven out of public schools. It is the only hour in the week when our children can learn the word of God and the deep things of the soul. But how can the Sunday-school teach the children without teachers? "Oh," you say, "I am so weary—do not ask me." "I do not feel competent—do not ask me." "I do not know enough about the Bible—do not ask me."

Are you any more weary than John Wanamaker, and other great captains of industry, who give their Sundays to childhood? Are you any more tired than the public-school teacher, who has taught children all the week, or the clerk, whose hours are longer than yours, or the little mother, who works all day and watches half the night? You fathers and mothers are not competent? Then who is to teach your children and your neighbors' chil-

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dren? You do not know the Bible well enough? Then is it not high time that you began to study and learn the great Book? I speak it in love, but I speak the truth, when I say that the Sunday-schools of to-day are suffering deeply because of the indifference, the carelessness, not to say laziness, of Christian people. I do not think I have ever heard anything that threw so much light upon the secret of his power than when his friend has told us that, all through Harvard, Theodore Roosevelt taught a Sunday-school class. He did not mind what church it was in. When he was over-strenuous for the staid ceremonies of the High Church, he parted from it without anger, and went into another church. In that act of consecration I see the budding of his fame. Whether he was cowboy, author, police commissioner, President, or Christian, he was in earnest. Consecration is conquest. It is hard for most of us to consecrate our money to God. The conservatism of Christians in giving unto the Lord is the discouragement to men who study it. How few men

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give unto self-denial. A good Jew, three thousand years ago, gave one-tenth of his income to God. When will the church, that calls itself after Christ, reach the standard of the Jew? When men are asked to give, they figure how little—not how much. We often meet the man who says, “I cannot afford to go to church, because there is always a call for money. Salvation used to be free.”

Was salvation free when Jesus and the apostles lived, and suffered, and went homeless, and died for men? Was salvation free when Luther, and Calvin, and Wesley turned their backs on ease, and safety, and plenty, and chose the path of persecution and poverty? Was salvation free when our fathers crossed the sea, giving up home, and fatherland, and choosing the wilderness, that their children might have the Kingdom of God? Wherever men have had liberty, and learning, and privilege, and religion, have not other men died and given it to them? And what do churches want with money? Is it not for alms, and teachers, and healing,

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and uplifting of men, and women, and little children?

God is here! He is calling. He has been to the home of your neighbor and laid his hand on the eldest boy—the pride of the household—and said unto him, “Come away from all this and preach the gospel to the poor. Take neither two coats, but only thy staff.” And lo! he is yonder among the cannibals, like Chalmers. He is yonder among the lepers, like Damien of Molokai. He is yonder, like Livingstone, in the jungles of Africa. He is in the purlieu of the great city, like Booth and Graham Taylor. He is out yonder on the frontier, like Whitman or Kingsbury. All these, like the Master, “have nowhere to lay their heads,” nor will they have, until, like their Master, they borrow some tomb in which to sleep on the hillside. That is the consecration God has asked of your neighbor’s child. Now He comes to you, and He says, “I have given you stewardship in the world of trade. I have not asked for your child; let him grow up in the home love, in the home land, in

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the home life. Of you, I ask the food and the medicine for those who are on the firing line."

And this appeal shall not go unheeded. Every man has the heroic in him and promptings to be great. "Here am I, send me," is the cry of Isaiah. He had always passed for a courtier, but that splendid consecration made him a prophet. "Here am I, use me," and it is the proud descendant of seven earls who, with person, position, and pocket, becomes both tribune and almoner for the poor and distressed. By a life dedicated to God's poor and Christ's little ones, he made the name of Shaftesbury to shine forever and ever as a star. "Take me, or take mine," say men on every side, and like the widow of old, they give their mite or their much unto the work of God. There never was a time since the world began when there was so much service, so much care for others, so much giving till it hurts, as there is to-day. It is like the dawn of summer. Every young man must surely feel this touch and thrill of his time. "I beseech

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you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God. It is your reasonable service.”

But the word sacrifice hath in it a yet still sterner meaning. Modern preaching is sometimes criticised for leaving out the cross of Christ. It is a true accusation, and not against preaching only, but against all modern life. We have left the cross out of life, and it may not be.

In the woods, I have seen the animal mother—brute though she be—lay down her strength, even unto death, for the sake of her helpless babe. In the fields, no bud unfolds into a flower, no corn grows on the stalk, save something dies. From the cabin of the pioneer, from the hut of the miner and the tenement of the poor, God leads forth now and again a great man; but into the world he always comes through some gateway of great denial. Well did Frances Willard, as she remembered the hard life of the Wisconsin farm, call her mother, “St. Courageous.” Well did Napoleon call the mothers of France “the

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martyrs of France." Motherhood is a living martyrdom. "Every babe that is born is at a woman's peril, and every man that dies leaves a broken heart." You cannot rule the cross out of either life or religion. To leave the cross of Christ out of our words is bad; to leave it out of our lives is fatal. Without the cross, Jesus was but a gentleman; without the cross of sacrifice, Christianity is but an ethical culture.

In one of her best books Mrs. Phelps Ward tells us of the conventional church life in a cultured town. The church held in its fellowship the good, and respectable, and fashionable. Life went on in it genteelly and without a ripple. At last this church called a young minister. The council refused him ordination because he was not as sure of the Last Things as the old dry-as-dust preachers were. Turned out by his own cultured people, Emanuel Bayard turned to the outcasts of the town—the fisher folk, the drunkard, and the harlot. They hated ministers. They had not been inside of a church for years. They

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would not listen to any sermon, however eloquent.

He found a man drunk and beating his wife. He knocked the wife-beater down, and then went home with the drunkard, and living with him like a brother redeemed him from his cups. He sought out a Magdalen in her house of sin, and took her to a decent house, walking by her side up the main street of the town at midnight, and, as in the olden time, this woman, taken in her sin, fell sobbing at the feet of the preacher, melted to the heart by the fact that he cared for her soul, and for her sake endured the shame and byword of the scoffer.

A ship went to pieces on the rocks. The sea was so rough that not a single lifeboat could live on it. Not even an old sailor dared breast the waves. This frail minister, girding himself with a rope, despite the warnings and entreaty of his seagoing people, plunged into the storm and brought back two men alive. After that the sailor folk called him a minister, and clave unto him as sheep follow a shepherd.

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He, by inheritance, was a child of wealth—his fortune went to uplift the fallen and he lived with the very poor. He loved unto madness a beautiful woman of culture and position, but, like his Master, turned his back on earth's holy joy, because so mean was his life that none could be asked to share it.

It was August, and the churches were closed or empty. This man said he would preach. The multitudes gathered as of old. There were a thousand there, besides the women and children. All was noise and confusion. The preacher appeared, and, as by magic, all was still and orderly. "Was it magic, or miracle? Was it holiness, or eloquence? Did he speak with the tongue of men or angels? Not a man moved. Not a soul but was rapt as if they heard the heavens speak. The thousands were as gentle as one. This sermon seemed more the cry of a spirit there in the shadows than a man. It plead as no man ever plead who had not first forgotten himself in self-denial and remembered the love of the great God. Fishermen, with one foot on the sand and the other

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on their stranded dories, stood like men afraid to stir. The uplifted eyes of the throng took on a look of awe. It grew darker, and when no man could more see his face they knew he was praying for their souls. Some fell on their knees, while the heads of others got no farther than their guilty breasts, where they hung like children. The sound of stifled sobbing mingled with the waves." Italian laborers cried, "Behold! there is the Christman!" From that night many dated the beginning of new lives. What was the secret? May it not have been that they loved the preacher that first loved them? It is the all-secret of Christ, and is yet omnipotent over rude men. I will not tell the story further. I care not that at last Emanuel Bayard, in that village, suffered martyrdom, and died at the hands of hate and persecution. I do care to know that the sacrifice lifted many into newness of life. The cross of Christ, in the life of any one of His children, hath power yet to redeem people from their sins. There is no Christ life without sacrifice. With Paul I cry to-day, "I beseech

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you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, for it is your reasonable service." The Christian man is to be the Christman!

To be a Christian, then, is hard work. It is loss of ease, and it is at cost of sacrifice. Why should men take up the cross and be crucified? Why does Paul urge this hard life upon his friends and upon his dear children of the gospel? We must have reasons. Men are borne away by motives, as wind carries seed over distant seas. Great nations are all the children of great motives. So David Swing says, "Individuals are led on, not by the steeds which draw the sun, nor by lines that draw the car of the conqueror, but by motives, decisive and powerful."

What are the motives for this Christian life? How can you impel me to it? Paul calls it "a reasonable service," but he means more than logic when he uses that word "reasonable." Logic is bloodless. Men do not die for an *Ergo*. It is not enough to light the brain. To make men deny themselves, you must warm the heart. Reason is not enough.

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Another great motive is fear. The old-time preacher dwelt much on this motive. To be a Christian was to “flee from the wrath to come.” Better were it for us, I think, to have some of this old-time fear of punishment. There is something in God to fear. I know there is in this world, and I believe there is in another world. “The wages of sin is death,” in field, in herd, in nation, in home, and in soul.

But Paul does not appeal to men’s fear. He has a higher motive. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” Paul knew love and wrote its classic. He ran his finger through all the vocabulary of rich speech, and selected out three words and put them down. The first word he put down was Faith—“And by faith were the worlds made.” The second word he set down was Hope—“And by hope are we saved.” The third word he set down was Love—“And the greatest of these is love.”

Read the greatest poem in the world, and I know its author—Love wrote it. Give me the sweetest music in the world, and I know its

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author—Love sang it. Find me the most splendid home standing upon the earth, and I know its architect—Love built it. Read me tales of war and daring, and pick out the finest part of heroism, and I know before you tell me that Love dared and bled and died—“Love never faileth.” And God is Love.

Why doesn't Paul appeal to us, then, to engage in Christian service by the love of God? That is what John lived to be a hundred years old to preach, and he grew beautiful as he told it to men. That is what Henry Ward Beecher proclaimed with master eloquence, and the old cruel Calvinism melted out of our theology like the frost when the spring has come. That is what Phillips Brooks preached, when the heart of New England was stirred and swept by sympathy and kindling emotion, as the leaves of the forest are stirred by the breath of the south wind. Why did not Paul say, “I beseech you, by the love of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifice unto God”?

Because that would have been short of the truth. To say that God loves us is not enough.

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God ought to love us. We are His children and we have a right to His providence, and to His care, and to His love. If He did not love us, He would be less than man. Sometimes love is expected, and may be demanded. We count it not a virtue for a human father to feed his children and clothe them—it is his obligation. God began us, and He is in duty bound to provide for us and to love us.

But even love hath its heights. Love may go beyond its obligations. You and I have seen that and will never cease to wonder. Here in a book we read a bad man loves a good woman. It is hopeless, for she is already pledged to another man. His love for her makes him honest, and sober, and true—that much she had a right to expect. But when in an hour of calamity her husband is doomed to die, and this man voluntarily comes by night, and by stealth gains his prison cell, and goes out to meet death with a smile, in his stead, we know that love has more than paid its debt. It has become heroic.

We read in the New Testament that Jesus was

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a man of love. He gives not blow for blow, nor curse for curse. He never tries to blast His enemies. That much we have a right to expect. It is love's price. But when, in the hour of His martyrdom, He forgets His own pain to plead and pray that his Father may spare His enemies, He outdoes love. There we see love has become a martyr.

You and I turn back the pages of our childhood. We see that our father and mother fed and clothed us and housed us—it was their obligation. By dint of striving and sacrifice and self-denial they gave us opportunity of education. We are awed by their love, when we see what it cost them, but still it was a part of their obligation. A hundred times while we are yet with them, and since we have gone away from them and left them to live our own lives, we have failed, and fallen, and disappointed them. Our enemies have jeered us, and the world condemned us, and even friends have fallen away from us. But whatever our failure, the love of the home folk has never given out. Father sold his farm and gave

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his last dollar to save us from ruin and bankruptcy.

It may have been worse than that. We may have violated the laws of the State; we may have been condemned by a jury of our peers; we may have been sent to State prison, or to the scaffold. But no man yet ever went to the prison cell or the scaffold attended only by the jailer, the hangman, and the priest. Right along by his side, with weeping eyes and breaking heart, but with arms about him, clinging to him to the last, there walked an old man, or maybe a woman with a faded face. And even while stern men were reading the death-warrant, these were talking through their tears, and they were appealing unto God, and their words were, "O Father, Thou knowest our hearts, and once a child always a child. He may be lost to others, but he can never be lost to us and to Thee. There is yet good in him. O Father Divine, it was our fault in part he fell. It is we who have failed. Lay it not to his charge; and give him yet one more chance." What is that? Love? It is

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more than love. It is love in martyrdom. It is love become heroic!

When love becomes heroic, it has a new name, and that name is mercy. Love in martyrdom is mercy. Love in sacrifice is mercy. Love, that is undeserved, and unexpected, and unmerited, is always mercy.

And now at last there is let loose a motive that sweeps the heart, as the wind sweeps the sea. It is like a gale. I think it would drive everything before it. I have received mercies from men. I am thinking of my father, who sometimes failed to be just because he was kind. I am thinking of my mother, who for love's sake saved others, but herself she could not save. I am thinking of loved ones who for harshness gave me kindness, who for roughness gave me gentleness, who for coldness gave me sympathy, who for impatience gave me patience, and who for selfishness gave me self-denial. Only the angels of God knew it.

I am borne away by these memories of undeserved ministrations of love, and I call back

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to those friends, both dead and living, “ Oh, dear friends, you have bound me to goodness forever.”

But man’s kindness is but a little thing as compared with God’s. Like the tiny rivulet to the sea is man’s generosity as compared with God’s generosity. We have been undeserving, and yet He has not been stingy. We have been forgetful, but He has not slumbered nor slept. We have been unfilial, and yet He has given us love that has never been clouded nor ceased to shine. How many times has He been merciful? I do not know; I cannot even think. A thousand fell at my side, but it did not come nigh me. “ There was the destruction that wasted at noonday; there was the pestilence that walketh in darkness,” and yet I went unscathed. “ The soul that sinneth, it shall die ” —I have sinned, and yet I have not died. He hath relented. He let the lifted thunder drop! Oh, the mercies of God are over us and around us, as the sky and stars are over and around the earth. We cannot count them, “ for in

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number they are more than the sands of the sea." "By the mercies of God, I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

The Reagent for Christian
Character

*And ah! for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be.*

TENNYSON'S "MAUD."

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

JOHN 3:3-8.

I go to the drunkard and say, "Cease your cup, change your company, and though I do not promise that to-day or to-morrow you shall be rid of the fiery devil, I say that in this way lies salvation." I say to him, "You must be born again;" and not only that, I say, "You may." "But," says he, "I have drank away all my friends, all my property, all my health; you tell me I must be born again: but I know that I am going to be damned; and whether the time is a little longer or a little shorter, I don't care." But I say to him, "You may be born again." What is that worth to him? It is worth his recovery, his restoration to health, and to friendship and to prosperity. And I say to every intemperate man, to every lustful man, to every man who has gone over into the slough of passion and of evil-doing, "Not only must you, but you may be born again. The wheels can turn backward as well as forward; and you may be recovered. There is hope for all."

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

CHAPTER SIX

The Reagent for Christian Character



CHARACTER is the currency of the Kingdom of God. There are counterfeits: but the counterfeit is certificate of the genuine. Hypocrites prove the existence of good men.

The history of character is like the history of money—men try to inflate it. We are all familiar with the “greenback movement.” It was an effort to make men rich by stamping a piece of paper with a dollar-mark. It was like a man’s paying his debts with notes of hand. People will take them so long as back of them are securities in the bank vault, and not a minute longer.

People will take greenbacks of the Government just as long as they certify to gold in the vault, but when the gold gives out with

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its intrinsic value, the greenbacks are nothing. Strange to say, there has been a "greenback craze" in the Christian church. For centuries and centuries both Romanists and Protestants have taught the world that a man entered heaven, not because of what he did, nor yet because of what he was, but because of what he believed; or because of the cross with which he was signed; or the creed which he said. The teaching was that if a man would submit himself to a priest, or a creed, then not for any worth of his own, but through the merits of Another, he would be treated as though he were of worth. The teaching of imputed righteousness is the "greenback" heresy in the Christian church. It is dead now, but it has done great mischief in shaking the confidence of men in the church and in the religion of the church. No, whether it is in money, or in character, fiat value is no value at all. It is with men, as with money, they are at last measured by their intrinsic worth.

We are more familiar with the "free silver movement." It was an attempt to make the

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nation rich by increasing the *bulk* of its money. Just as though the quantity of silver, or gold even, was sufficient to make people rich. The reason we call a man rich, who has gold or silver, is because that gold and silver stands for something. It represents long sacrifice, and long industry, and wisdom, and service and suffering. You might rain gold and silver out of the heavens upon a tribe of savages, and it would not make them rich. The gold *plus* the struggle and the character of the man, makes him rich. And so in the world of character, there is a great movement in our time to bring in the Kingdom of God simply by making bread plenty, and multiplying clothes, and easy work, and holidays. We are told that if we could have a redistribution of wealth, we would have the Kingdom of God. It is all in vain. The Kingdom of God, in the last analysis, is not the Kingdom of clothes, or the Kingdom of pleasure; it is the Kingdom of character. Any people have just as much of the Kingdom of God as they have virtue.

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It is all in vain for men to try and find a short cut into the Kingdom of God. You cannot make a man a citizen of that Kingdom by calling him one, if he is not, or by putting on the garb, if he has not the heart. The Kingdom of God is character; salvation is character; Christianity is character; Christianity is man-making and man-building. It is the taking for raw materials humanity as we find it, with all its faults, with all its sins, and with all its vices, and transforming it into humanity as it should be, with all the fulness of the stature of Jesus Christ. The heart of Christianity lies in this, that it takes the wastes and the refuse of human life and transforms it into the wealth of God.

This is the sure sign of a genius, that he can create what ought to be out of what is. His miracle lies in this, that he plucks for us the flower named the Ideal, and lo! he has grown it out of the old stock called the real. Therein lies the fascination of the pioneer. He is the man who makes a garden out of the wilderness. Men called Chicago the Phœ-

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nix City, because, like the fallen bird of Egypt, she arose out of her ashes more beautiful than ever.

Look at the South at the close of the war. Once the garden of the world, it had been plowed by shell and harrowed by steel, until it was the grave of civilization. How poor! How stripped! How bleeding! It took ten dollars to make one cent and five hundred dollars to buy a barrel of flour. "I'll give you \$20,000 for that horse," said a cavalry officer to General Gordon. "Not much. I have just paid a nigger \$1,000 for currying him," was the reply. The General tells us that it was at that time he paid \$1,200 for two wool hats, and the dealer threw off three hundred because he took two. Let the eloquent Grady tell the rest:

"Then it was they sent their war horses to the furrow: the waste places were clothed and the earth smiled with a harvest. The Southern merchant began business with interest at five per cent. per month. The people of Atlanta crept out of holes cut like swallows'

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nests in the hillsides, where they had found refuge during the siege, to find ruins. Five hundred shanties, as if by magic, were fashioned from the iron roofing of destroyed buildings. In 1866 there were four men in Atlanta worth \$10,000. In 1886 there were six men worth ten millions of dollars. And so the story goes all over the South. How from chaos and desolation the currents of trade trickled, and swelled, and took orderly way: How rivers were spanned and the wilderness pierced with the iron rail: How frugality came with misfortune; fortitude with sorrow, and with necessity, invention: How the theatre of the most gigantic war in history, the residence of five millions of manumitted slaves, in twenty-five years became the home of almost twenty millions of free men, the home of a people that in swift and amazing recuperation have discounted the miracle wrought by the French people after the Franco-Prussian War—that is the tale of the New South.”

Such an achievement, creating wealth out of

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poverty, building prosperity out of desolation, gathering victory out of defeat, manifests clearly the genius of the American man. The sure mark of all genius is that he can create what ought to be out of what is.

Another thing: Watch any great creative genius, and he works his wonders by using what other men throw away.

Every thoughtful student of his kind must bemoan the wastefulness of man. You can mark the stage of a people's journey away from barbarism by its prodigality. The savage wastes everything he cannot wear and eat in one day. He has no property. Civilization is husbandry. We are still civilized only in spots.

Charles Lamb, you remember, tells us that it was by accident men discovered "Roast Pig." It was a Chinese cottage that was burned by a boy's carelessness, and a litter of pigs was roasted. In exploring the ruins, the boy handled the burned pigs, happened to put his soiled hand to his lips, and found out that roast pig was good to eat. He told his father,

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and the news spread secretly, so that other people began to burn down their houses also that they and their neighbors might have roast pig. It was a rare and expensive delicacy, and at first unlawful. But at last it became general, and a great man came who showed them how to build a fire out of chips and roast the pig, and still save their house. Then the price of roast pig fell, and men grew rich on what they saved.

Forty years ago men wasted one-half of the pig when they killed him—bones, bristles, teeth, offal, eyes, feet, snout, and tail. Mr. Armour went to killing pigs for the market. He sold his meat like other men, but he turned all the waste into lard, and jelly, and buttons, and butter, and soup, and cologne. He found a way to market every part and particle of a pig. The use of these wastes made him a multi-millionnaire, and made the youth of Chicago rich with the Institute.

That is the story of all our wealth. Wealth is thrift and civilization is utility. Virginia was as rich in Powhatan's day as in Jeffer-

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son's. But the savages lived poor in the midst of plenty. They let everything go to waste. The white man used what the red man threw away, and lo! the white man was rich.

The farmer utilizes the soil which the hunter wastes, and grows rich. The lumberman utilizes the logs which the farmer burns, and he is made rich. The tanner utilizes the bark which the lumberman wastes, and he is made rich. The pulp mill man uses the branches and tops which the tanner leaves, and he is made rich. The miner comes along and digs the coal which none of them saw, and he is made rich. The coke man comes and saves the gas in the coal, and he is made rich. At last the gas man comes and takes the odor which the coke man wastes, and dilutes it with water and sells it for light, and that odor mixed with water makes him a millionaire. Most great fortunes have been made by saving what other men have thrown away.

The man who shows us how to utilize the wastes of the world is a benefactor. He shows us how to utilize the wandering winds, and

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the ship has come, and the ocean is a highway. He shows us how to utilize steam, and the railroad has come, binding together distant lands with links of steel. He shows us how to utilize the wasted power of the idly flowing river, and our corn is ground, and our wheat made into flour. He shows us how to utilize the waste force of electricity, and we have wings for our voice, and we have light for our nights. What we call civilization is the learning to use what the barbarian wastes. The waste of the world is the wealth of the world.

It is easy for us to see this same principle in the world of knowledge. It is a matter of common remark nowadays that "of the making of books there is no end." Magazines have multiplied beyond our ability to count. It has not always been so. Only a few centuries ago there were but a few score of books in the world, and each one of them was worth a small fortune. There were only two or three subjects on which men ever wrote books. Nowadays, books are written about every con-

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ceivable subject. Then only one man out of a century was a writer; to-day every small town has its author. Once there were but few schools, and they were open only to the sons of the rich; to-day State declares that every child has as much right to schooling as to fresh air. Once it was a great distinction to be a scholar. Even in the days of our forefathers, a family was thought to be fortunate if it should have one scholar out of its number. In those days also every family was expected to have at least one dunce. Now-adays every child has a chance to be a scholar; and the dunce is often found out to be one needing only special training to be the wisest of all. Men like Horace Mann have taught us how to utilize the educational wastes of society. And all our libraries, and laboratories, and literature, and books, have come about because we have worked the ledge of learning that is in every human breast. The waste of the old-time educational world to-day makes up the wealth of modern culture.

The difference between the old ideas of gov-

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ernment and our modern notions lies wrapped up in this: we have learned to utilize the waste of the old-time state. In the drama of Julius Cæsar, Shakespeare has given us a picture of the old-time state. There was in Rome but one only man and his name was Cæsar. There were some Senators, but they were puppets. There were some freemen, but only so in name. The most were slaves. Cæsar was all in all. He makes the dissatisfied Cassius say:

*“Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.*

*Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art
sham'd!*

*Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble
bloods!*

*When went there by an age, since the great
flood,
But it was famed with more than with one
man?*

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*When could they say till now, that talk'd
of Rome,
That her wide walls encompass'd but one
man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough
When there is in it but one only man."*

When feudalism came in Europe it was dark and bloody, but it left behind this lasting good—it gave the world a nobility. And the world was better with many masters than one. Feudalism turned a tiny bit of the universal waste into men.

When feudalism could do no more, the guilds and the maritime cities came. Their history is one of quarrel and bloodshed: But their leaders in commerce went into statecraft, and there sprang up limited monarchies, and Houses of Parliament, and a great middle class—intelligent, and brave, and free. More of the waste political forces had been utilized; and law, and liberty, and justice, and right were written never to be erased, from men's political Bible.

Then our fathers came, and by dint of cour-

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age, and light of faith, they proclaimed to the world, and made their word good with their swords, every man is a possible King, a ruler in disguise, and has the power to govern himself. Eighty years later their grandchildren saw that the truth applied to their black legions of industry: and freeing their slaves gave to the world its first real Democracy. For a Democracy is only the use of political forces that Kings and nobles had wasted. In politics even the waste is the wealth of the world.

Christ applied this method to religion. This is his distinguishing mark as a spiritual leader. Anybody can dream of a Kingdom of God. Bellamy can, the Socialist can. But who can out of the given material realize it? It would be easy enough to make a kingdom of God, if one could cause it to spring, like Atlantis, full grown and perfect, out of the midst of the sea. It were not hard to make Eden a Paradise. It was all new and the people were made to order. Plato dreamed, and it was only a dream. Augustine dreamed;

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Bacon dreamed; Sir Thomas More dreamed; Brook Farm dreamed; Jesus accomplished. The doctrinaire can save the world with ideal conditions and ideal materials. The Saviour saves the world in present conditions and by use of actual materials.

He began to look about Him for his materials. He wanted prophets—"There had been no vision for four hundred years." He wanted preachers—Oratory was a lost art. He wanted Apostles—The Pharisees held the chief places in every synagogue and they were "whitened sepulchres." He wanted citizens of His heavenly Kingdom—and lo! there were the materialistic Sadducees, the time-serving Herodians, the miserly Publicans, a few desperate men dreaming of revolution rather than righteousness, and as for the people, sordid, suffering, stumbling, sinning, they were as sheep without a shepherd.

But He set to with the materials at hand. He proposed to bring in the Kingdom of God by utilizing the moral and spiritual waste about Him. See what He did.

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Out of all the influential classes, not one followed Jesus openly, while He was yet alive. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea needed His martyrdom to make them declare their allegiance. Paul, the first scholar of the church, did not come till afterward. In the very beginning of his ministry Jesus went to Jerusalem. He spoke in the Temple-porch before He preached in the synagogue, where He was brought up. Few besides Galileans ever followed Him; and they were rustics. He was compelled to build His Kingdom out of the lowly.

The Spaniards wanted to be rich. They sent forth armies to conquer and spoil the new world. They destroyed themselves and left the new world a wilderness and desolation. The Anglo-Saxon wanted wealth. He, too, sent forth an army into the new world. It was an army of industry, with axe, and plow, and sickle. They waxed mighty, and they changed the waste places of the earth into gardens, and made the desert to blossom as the rose.

Other teachers have sought to bring in the

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Kingdom of God by selection. Only the House of Aaron were to be priests. Only the Jews were the people of God. Only the elect would be saved. Only the good would be taken. That was not the method of Jesus. He, too, proposes to build the Kingdom. But regeneration, not election, is His method. He will make His kingdom rich out of the wastes of society.

We saw whence came His teachers. Look at the citizens of His Kingdom. They were still more unpromising. In Rome, literary men made no mention of the Christian church. It was beneath their notice. The historian dismissed it as a superstition among slaves. In Jerusalem, the priests despised it as heretical, ignorant, and dangerous, only because of its rabble. Herod watched it lest it might be revolutionary. But the publican penitently took Christ's offer of fellowship. The dying thief gladly seized His outstretched hand. The lepers kneeled before Him. The harlot's heart broke when there came a teacher with sympathy and hope for her. The common

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people heard Him gladly. Jesus built the Kingdom of God out of the refuse and waste of society.

This is the imperial truth of Christianity, and we have need in our day to emphasize it. The church of our time is too much on the defensive. It seems to be making an apology and begging for the mere boon of existence. There is no place where the wastes of society are so awful as in the great city, and it is just where the church is most in despair.

Listen to the voices crying in the night. They sound like human beings in distress. The one voice tells about the moral wreckage of our cities. Here are our slums, where little children are born with the taint of moral leprosy on them from the cradle. Here are our prisons, and they are teeming with life. Our children's courts hear a story every day that will break your heart. All through the cold Winter there is heard little children crying from cold, and all the years through they die for want of bread. Babies are dying for fresh air. Mothers kill their own children

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because they cannot feed them. Everywhere there is drunkenness and crime. Every night vice holds a carnival. Every day greed makes merchandise out of the poor. The slum grows year by year, and every year the tides of degeneracy rise higher and higher. That voice telling of our wastes is heart-breaking, and is like the voice of Rachel weeping for her children.

The other voice is more quiet. Fear speaks softly. Dread does not cry out from the house-tops. Its wail is, "What is going to become of the Kingdom of God? Our Republic is not what our fathers dreamed. City government is public robbery. The working people do not go to church. Sunday is a holiday more than a Holy day. What is going to become of the church to-morrow? Where are we going to get our ministers, and our deacons, and our Sunday-school superintendents? Where are we going to get enough good people to hold up the right? How can we get people to go to church? A hundred different remedies are being applied. We are opening hospitals; we

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are organizing charities; we are opening soup houses. Our ministers and our workers are running their legs off and fairly scouring the tenement houses to find, here and there, Bible-reading men, and Sunday-keeping families, and church-going classes."

We will never succeed. The day Rome died she had more charities than ever before. Money is not enough. A full belly and a good coat do not make a Christian. The sins of the slums, all of them, grow ranker on the boulevard. We have need to remember that the genius of Jesus Christ lay in the truth which he held—that God does not carry on the world simply at last to save out of the ruins and wreck of it a few kings, or a few bishops, or a few ministers, or a few deacons, or a few fine folks. He is not satisfied to gain the respectable and worth while. He demands more than the industrious, and the law-abiding, and the church-going, and the home-loving people. God's Kingdom is in all and over all. His wealth comes because He gathers up the broken pieces; He has come to seek and to save

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the lost. He is after the sheep on the mountain; the coin that is lost; the prodigal and the fallen. He means to have the mining camps and the saloons and the dives and the slums.

“The wicked man shall forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and they shall return unto God, for He will abundantly pardon.” The gospel is not sugar to keep the good people sweet, nor salt to keep moral people from spoiling; it is the leaven that will transfigure and transform and regenerate and change the man of sin into the man of God. Regeneration is the watchword of the Christian Church. “He may be born again,” is the gospel for the hour. The purpose of Jesus is to use the wastes of society, and out of them to make up the wealth of the Kingdom of God.

This law applies to the individual as well as society. For after all society is only a group of individuals. And the evils of society are only the sins of individual men and women. That is a thing we always forget. We think

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the bad are all bad, and the good are all good. The fact is that the so-called good people, by so much as there is evil in them, help to make up the evil of society. And the bad people, by so much as there is good in them, help make up the good of society. There are few that are all good. I never heard of a man who was all bad. I think most of us are fatalists, when we come to consider our moral lives.

I heard a preacher say the other day: "It is easy enough for a man like Mr. Beecher to succeed in the ministry, for he was a consummate orator. It is easy enough for a man like Dr. Lyman to succeed in the ministry, for he was born good, he is another St. John. But most of us are neither orators, nor St. Johns; and we have a hard time of it." I have been thinking about that saying ever since, and it, to my mind, pictures our attitude toward our moral attainments. I hear people all around me say, "I have a quick temper," "I have a sharp tongue," "I am not a good mixer," "I cannot bear people."

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And we excuse our dispositions, and our selfishness, and our stinginess, and our coldness, and our moral unattractiveness, and our spiritual poverty, by saying we were made that way. I heard a drunkard say, "I am a drunkard's son." I heard a bad woman say, "I cannot help it, I was made that way."

Do these excuses excuse? What have we all come from? If modern science is right, from the animal. And all the love we have, and all the sympathy, has come to us because the Spirit of God has changed the brass of the brute into the gold of the man; the animal into the spiritual. What we need is to let God change other animal qualities into divine qualities. The temper that smites like the lightning—God can tame it and change it into a fiery courage that will carry light into dark places. That sharp tongue may be bridled, and taught to speak words of liquid love. That selfishness may be melted into sympathy. I know that St. John the Divine was once fiery, and bigoted, and hateful. It was when he gave himself into the keeping of the

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Son of God that he became the man of love. And Jesus Christ comes to us, as of old, and claims all the waste forces of our lives for His service. Let us bring the tiger that is left in us, and the wolf that is left in us, and the hawk that is left in us, and the porcupine that is left in us, unto Him. Let the cruelty be changed into kindness, and the treachery into friendship, and the fierceness changed into gentleness, and the antagonism changed into winsomeness. Let God gather up the broken fragments of our lives that we may become His, all and all, that nothing shall be lost.

And now we come to Christ's great reagent for Character. Men who transform the wastes of a factory into merchandise, first see what other men do not see,—that there is value in refuse. Then, by means of some reagent, they reduce the valuable, and separate it out of the worthless. The process is twofold, in the transforming of clay into gold, of refuse into merchandise: First, Seeing value. Second, Freeing value.

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This is exactly the process of Christ's salvation of the wastes of society. He sees good where men have only found evil; and then He supplies strength to enable the good to rise out of and triumph over the evil. Confidence and grace are Christ's reagents of Character.

God's method of building up the divine in men is the method of trusting them and helping them. He takes stock in them. He says there is more in men than appears on the outside, or has ever appeared anywhere. When He treats them as if they were divine, they themselves begin to act divinely. His is the ministry of confidence.

God found a whole race of men and women making bricks under the shadow of the Pyramids. They were property, like cattle to be beaten, killed, worked, and sold—that is all the world saw. That is what Pharaoh called them: and so history wrote them down. God appeared in their darkest hours and cried: "Behold my chosen people! They shall be free and have the destiny of their own life in their

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keeping. They shall form a nation, elect their own judges, enact their own laws, and select their own King." Suffrage? Government? What sort of a government will those ignorant slaves make? Are they fit to rule themselves? No! but God put them at it. He trusted them. He called them his own and stuck to them, through two thousand years, in evil as well as good report. And I ask you by the light of all the shining history of the Hebrew nation, was God not right in trusting them? By investing confidence in the down-trodden, did He not raise them up into his best children?

God sent forth His Son. Jesus came a preaching. He met Peter and all the rest—plain, untaught, peasants, doomed to slave like beasts that perish, while they lived, and to be buried on its banks, and forgotten as quickly as the waves of their own Galilee. He said: "Ye are my disciples. I will give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Was he mad? So the Romans said. But treated like sons of God, and counted on by the

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purpose and plan of God, see these twelve fisher folk become the rulers of the world in their own lifetime, and see them stand next to Jesus in the temple of history.

But that is not all. There is no exception to the rule. Jesus met others, besides, in his short ministry: His brothers who did not believe on Him, and the Pharisees, haughty and cold; the Sadducees denying the existence of the soul, and proclaiming the gospel of despair; the outcast; the robber and murderer; the fallen woman who until His time had received nothing softer than a stone, nothing kinder than public scorn; the custom-house officer; the ignorant and close-fisted tax-collector, who was in the public mind in the same odor as the saloon-keeper of to-day. These and such folk Jesus met, and with them lived his short life, and to them brought a message from high heaven. What was it? Denunciation and impending doom like John? Hatred and scorn like the old theology? No. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," is what He said.

"After that glimpse of the Divine Confi-

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dence, I cannot falter or finally fail. That is the truth for which I have long waited. That sort of life is what my soul has so long cried for. Having felt the trust of God, I will never be afraid. I travel through time and bear its heavy loads, and will faint under its awful sorrows, and on I will go into the twilight, and midnight, and pain, but having beheld how God looks at my life, it is enough. His confidence in me has begun, and please God it shall never end." So many a weary man and heavy-hearted woman have seen and said, and then gone to their task or martyrdom with a song.

It is God's way of making men strong—make other men trust them. So Damon had his Pythias, and Dante his Beatrice, and Goethe his Schiller, and Cowper his Mrs. Unwin, and Wordsworth his Dorothy, and Robert Browning his gifted Elizabeth. Ah, when did any man ever grow strong or great but that someone took stock in him and believed in him?

Sir Walter was a sick, tow-headed boy, diffident and timid. On the playground of the

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then bullying school he was in agony, and none saw greatness for him. But at last, at James Ferguson's house, the lad saw Burns in the height of his fame, and Beattie, and Adam Smith, and other great ones. Burns went to the wall, looked on a picture, read an inscription written under it, and asked who wrote those tender lines. No one knew. The boy whispered the name of the unknown author, and Burns patted him on the head and said, "You'll be a man, me lad." It was Scott's birth hour. He went home and sobbed all night for joy. From that day he knew Scotland would have another poet—for hadn't the greatest Scotchman of all time believed in him, and prophesied great things for him?

And Thomas Carlyle, whose carelessness and boorishness crushed the choice soul out of Jane Welsh, would never have been heard of, but for her great inspiring love for him, and her trust in his mission, which never in all the dark starving time faltered. Jane Welsh's love and trust, and Emerson's friendship,

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gave the world this last great Puritan prophet.

And Jesus—I have often wondered so much about Him. What friends turned the village carpenter into the Messiah by simple trust in Him? The poor whom He met and believed on Him? His own Mother, who, though she could not understand either her own dreams for Him, or the strange words of the wise men at His cradle, or yet His own stranger words and actions in His maturity, when He became an itinerant wanderer with nowhere to lay His head. Ah! she kept the mysteries all treasured safely in her heart, and never failed to believe in Him and trust in Him in spite of all.

Was not the brooding and confidence of such a mother enough to have hatched the Divine out of a man? Or is Lew Wallace right when he speaks gentle words of another Mary, whose home was the cottage of Lazarus, who saw in the eyes of the Divine Man the light that has melted many another woman's true heart as it has shone from a true man's face?

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But as a means of saving men, I call attention to confidence as reagent of character. If an age of criticism is barren, and hath no great soul; if, like the corn, human achievement grows only in an atmosphere of love, and understanding, and appreciation, then how shall we begin to make the world better and uplift men around us?

The usual way is to find fault with men and point out their sins. The modern newspaper uses gall for ink, and pictures only evil. No daily paper will print the good things about a man; that does not make head-lines. It says in its haste, "All men are liars." All this infects the age with a spirit of denunciation. Let us beware of the fault-finder. It was not Christ's way. Men will become what you expect of them. Call a man a thief, and at last he will steal. Call him an honest man, and he will live up to his reputation. Love and trust are the great reagents for character.

Sydney Carton was a hack barrister, a drunkard, a peddler of evidence in a corrupt court

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of English law, a debauchee, an outcast man. He was treated kindly by an old doctor, and trusted by Lucie, his daughter. Where is there a wretch with soul so dead, that trusted by a pure girl he will not become pure with her? He loved her, but renounced all hopes for another man. He went from her presence, baptized with a new heroism, for she told him she believed in him, and would forever be his true friend. From that hour his life, though still wretched, was pure and true and oftentimes heroic in caring for the weak and poor. Twice or thrice a year he came to Lucie Darnay's home, and went away inspired. In the darkest days of the Revolution her husband went to Paris to help an old servant. He was seized and doomed to die. Then Carton came and exchanged places with him, and the next day, holding the hand of a tender and timid girl riding in the same tumbril to the guillotine, and keeping her brave by saying, "I am the resurrection and the life," died like the true hero he was. They said that he looked sublime and prophetic. It was be-

Reagent for Christian Character

cause one true-hearted woman believed in him!

This ministry of confidence is God's evangel, and He hath put it, as an almighty power, into our hands.

All day yesterday, and last year, when you were in the storm stress of the business world, and you thought of the faces at home, what did it do for you? Ah! many a man has been saved from failure by a woman's trust. Many a man has been saved from wrong and suicide by a baby's face. Many a friendless young man in yonder city, last year, hungry and discouraged, has been saved from sin and crime and cowardice by the picture of a gray-haired woman in yonder country farmhouse who every night knelt and told God what had been in her heart every waking moment for her boy.

Hate me, if you will; turn from me all fortune and friendship; hang me, if you must; but there in that old home is one woman's heart which will never believe all you say. She kissed my face when it was pure, and led

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me smiling and innocent into childhood sleep. And when she falls dying, her last breath will utter my name and breathe my praise.

That is the way mothers gird their children against failure, and save them when they are lost.

God is like that—the faithful One. God believes in you like that. God expects great things of you like that. Men do not know you; even wife and child suspect not the heights of your character. God knows, and expects, and waits. And you will live up to the Divine expectation!

A Young Man and His Mother's
Bible

As a mere literary monument, the English of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it, from the instant of its appearance, the standard of our language.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

From the time that, at my mother's feet or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there is anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

All that I have taught of Art, everything that I have written, whatever greatness there has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life, has simply been due to the fact that, when I was a child, my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible, and daily made me learn a part of it by heart.

JOHN RUSKIN.

I think I know my Bible as few literary men know it. There is no book in the world like it, and the finest novels ever written fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells. Whatever strong situations I have in my books are not of my creation, but are taken from the Bible. "The Deemster" is the story of the Prodigal Son. "The Bondman" is the story of Esau and Jacob. "The Scapegoat" is the story of Eli and his sons, but with Samuel as a little girl; and "The Manxman" is the story of David and Uriah.

HALL CAINE.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Young Man and His Mother's Bible



HE springs of civilization are three:

“The history of the world hangs on the race that built the Parthenon; on the race that ruled the world; and on the race that wrote the Bible.” Three great races—the Greek, the Roman, and the Hebrew: Three great achievements—art, law, and the Bible—and the greatest of these is the Bible. They who follow the streams of modern civilization back to their rise, come at last upon the Bible.

In our age noted for its love of childhood, education has been born again. Back of Horace Mann, back of Froebel, back of Pestalozzi, back of Abelard, we come at last upon the Teacher out of Galilee. Modern education is less the child of the Revival of learning, than of the printing of the New Testament.

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Wherever the Bible is on the tongue of the people, you find a spelling-book in the hands of their children. Modern education takes its rise in the teaching of Him who said, "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The other boasted achievement of our age is our government by the people. Take up your map, and run your eye over the ancient world and the mediæval world, and you will not find Democracy anywhere. Now look at the modern world, and you will find the reign of the people. In Holland—but it was in brave little Holland that men first unchained the Bible: In Switzerland—but it was in Geneva that John Calvin founded his theocracy, in which the Bible was both text-book and constitution: In England and Scotland—lands of Cromwell, Knox, Wycliffe, and the Free Kirk, where the Bible was song-book and literature: In America—land of Pilgrim and Puritan, who came into the wilderness for freedom to read the Bible for themselves, and in their own way practice its worship

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and its teachings. There is no reign of the people in Italy, or Spain, or South America. These are modern countries, and in some of them they have the name and dream of Democracy. But it is only a dream. They have no Democracy, for the people have no Bible. Moses and Jesus are the first Democrats. The Bible is the Mother of Democracy.

The glory of Italy is her art. What awoke the passion for beauty within her people, and kindled the genius of the great masters? Italian Art is a modern flower. Always those sons of the southern clime had used brush and easel. But for centuries they only learned art's language and wrought out art's prose. Then the divine afflatus fell upon them, and they made our galleries glorious forever. What stirred their sleeping genius? Let Raphael's Sistine tell you. Let Titian's Transfiguration testify. Let Angelico upon his knees whisper the secret. He has a Bible in his hand and his prayer is, "O Lord, teach me to paint thy Gospel." The Bible has inspired art.

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Music is still in her youth. She hath the heart of a child, and also the faith of a child. What baptized the children of genius with song? Listen to Handel's Messiah, and Haydn's Creation, and Mendelssohn's Elijah, and Gounod's Redemption, and even Wagner's Parsifal, and you will know that the great musical compositions are only the Bible set to music. The Bible is the inspiration of Music.

You and I belong to the English race, and the glory of the English race is its literature. Its cradle was a monastery, where Caedmon and Bede first sang of scriptural themes. From Chaucer's day till now, the Bible has been our literature as well as our religion. This book lent Milton his Paradise; Bunyan his dream; Tennyson his immortal hope; Browning his vision; rugged Carlyle his law; and Ruskin the splendors of his imagination. Victoria, Queen and Empress, was right when, handing a Bible to the Ambassador of an Oriental empire, she said, "Tell your master, this book is the secret of England's

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greatness." Of our literature, the Bible is both dew and sun.

And yet the Bible is a new book. We have not yet gotten used to it, or taken its true measure. All our ideas of it have been too small. The Bible is growing upon us. A hundred times men have thought they have said the final word about it, and had compassed its wonders in their definition. Then, lo! it grew and burst their old notion, and they had to make their definition larger. That is all there is to what we hear so much about nowadays, the storm that is raging over the Bible, called Higher Criticism.

Some say, and say it gladly, "It's end has come. The authority of the Bible is destroyed." They are vain babblers!

Then there are people who look upon this present discussion fearfully, and because the old definitions are crumbling, and the old conceptions are being thrown away, cry out in grief, "The Bible is being destroyed."

Just now in this country a new society has been formed to hold back Bible criticism. It

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is like forming a society to hold back the tides with your hand. It is like forming a society to go out into the garden, in the May days, and, by binding a band around each bursting grain, trying to keep back the harvest in the seed. It is not an earthquake; it is life. It is not destruction; it is growth. So I stand by all the present-day discussions, and fear, and acrimony, and I am not afraid. I see only birth-pangs. There are only growth-pains. God is causing more light to break out on his word. We are going to have a greater, grander, diviner Bible than the world ever knew.

The Bible is a new book. We have never yet fully possessed it. The Jewish church is older than the Bible. Abraham, the seer, was centuries before Ezra, the scribe.

Jesus did not have our Bible. The sacred writings, on which he fed and grew strong, were those of the Old Testament only. The gold of the New Testament was yet to be coined out of his own heart.

The early church did not have the Bible.

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Besides the Old Testament in Greek, the first churches had traditions of Jesus from those who knew him in the flesh. They had, now and then, a letter from some Apostle. Some are lost: some remain with us to this day. At last the Apostle John, longest to survive of the Twelve, and lingering on to his hundredth year, writes a biographical rhapsody of the Master. Its language is Greek, and his pen is dipped in love. He is the prophet of fire. Slowly it gets circulated in a few churches. Still earlier, Peter's disciple, John Mark, and Paul's protégé, Luke, the physician, and Matthew, the publican, wrote down an account of what they heard their masters tell about the life and doings and sayings of the Divine Master. They are a sort of Memorabilia. When Jesus does speak, he speaks through the lips of a man who had seen him in his youth, and who now is grown old; or through the lips of a man who knew a man who had known the Lord. They are neither photographs nor biographies. They are color; an atmosphere; portraits.

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A few of these scattered and widely different gospels, and histories, and letters survived. One church had one; some far distant church had another. Some were lost and again found. Some were lost and never found, and live only in quotation. No single writer ever dreamed he was adding a book to the Scriptures. The early church did not have the Bible.

After some three or four hundred years the church passed her childhood. In her youth she had overrun the world, and her entrance upon maturity was also her entrance upon royalty. She became a ruler. She had bishops, and cathedrals, and liturgies. But she did not have the Bible.

Then she began to prize those neglected letters and written traditions of her infancy. Polycarp's last disciple was long dead. He was the last living man who had ever seen a man who had seen an Apostle. The Master's words became precious. Becoming rich now, the church had leisure for study and scholarship. Scholars began to seek out the scattered manuscripts and copy them. There

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was, of course, no printing, and to possess a book required a fortune. Churches that had an old manuscript were exceedingly jealous of it, and each one claimed for its own the highest honor. As men went on collecting these manuscripts, they multiplied. There were different readings. Spurious writings sprang up purporting to come from Apostolic days. Councils met, scholars gave judgment; some were cast out, others were included. At last the canon was decided. The scholars of the church had a collection of sacred writings.

In 385 Jerome translated these collected writings into Latin. It was called the Vulgate, because it was translated into the common, or vulgar, tongue. It was counted almost sacrilege at the time, and it was only after two or three hundred years more that it became the universally accepted Scriptures. The church had now come to her palmy days. But for nearly a thousand years yet the world did not have a Bible. The church had a Bible, and it was written in a dead tongue.

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Only the scholar could read it. Only the rich could own it. Only the priest was permitted to study it. It was a chained book.

Then printing was invented. The revival of learning followed. Scholars began to print Bibles. Men like Wycliffe and Huss tried to translate it into the speech of the people. Rome forbade them, and burned the books when found, and persecuted with fire and prison all who published or possessed. To have a Bible was a crime. To be found reading it was death or imprisonment. The people of that day knew nothing more of the Bible than they do now of Homer, or not so much. When Columbus discovered America the world had no Bible.

For two hundred years longer this strife went on between the law of the church and the desire of the people to know. Martyrs died in every country. Partial translations were made in every land. Scholars were studying it. New manuscripts were discovered. Corrections were made, and at last, in the seventeenth century, under the compulsion of

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the English people, and under the permission of the English King, the King James English Bible was given to the world, four years after the settlement of Jamestown, and nine years before the Pilgrims came to Plymouth. The scholars who made it received only their board, and no pay; and the expense of publication was borne by private individuals.

The first authorized English Bible is only as old as the United States. This is the Bible of our fathers, and whose idiom has been the creator of English speech. " ¹It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten; like the sound of church bells, which the convert scarcely knows how he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. It is the part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. It is the representative of a man's best moments; all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and

¹ F. W. Faber.

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pure, and penitent, and good speaks to him forever out of his English Bible.”

But the end was not yet. Time went on and knowledge grew, and scholarship made gains. New manuscripts were discovered.

There are three great manuscripts of the Bible.¹ The oldest one is the manuscript in the Vatican, and this was not accessible to the men who made our English Bible.

Another great manuscript is called the Sinaitic manuscript. It was not discovered until 1844, and then it was found in an old monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, and was being thrown away as waste paper by the ignorant monks. It was not until 1859 that this manuscript was secured, and now reposes safely in the library at St. Petersburg, in the keeping of the Greek church.

The other manuscript is called the Alexandrian, and is in the British Museum.

Not one of these manuscripts was in the possession of the men who made the English

¹Smyth's "How We Got Our Bible," and Pattison's "History of the English Bible."

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Bible. But at last these had all been discovered or made accessible. Scholarship had grown. We knew a great deal more about the Greek language. Moreover, our own language had changed, and it was desired that there should be a more accurate translation. For the last one hundred years there had been more or less discussion about a new translation of the Bible that should include all this new knowledge. Several private translations were made. At last the scholarship and the reverence of England and America took action. And in the month of June, 1870, a company of distinguished scholars met for the first time in Jerusalem chamber in Westminster Abbey. It was a historic spot. There the Westminster confession had been drawn up. There had been made the prayer-book revision, but never was there a greater company than this company of quiet scholars who met on that June day to take up their sacred task. After ten years, as a result of their labor, the Revised Version of the English Bible was published.

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That Revised Version has not yet taken its place in the homes of the people. We are wedded to the words of the older version. But it has taken its place in the schools, in the pulpits, in the hands of the scholars. And, moreover, after two or three hundred years, it will be the language of the people. But whether it does, or whether there shall come yet some more better translation, the Revised Bible has a place of honor. It is superior to the old in accuracy, in reliability, and in authority. It is the best work of the best scholarship of the world. And now that it is being given into the hands of the people by the millions, one million of copies each year, it is not strange that men have said, "At last the world has the Bible."

But the end is not yet. The Higher Criticism has come. Men have been afraid of it, and complained that it was destroying the Bible. They said the same thing when men wanted to translate the Latin Vulgate into English. You remember, and so do I, with what suspicion and distrust many people looked on

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the Revised Version. Some called it sacrilege. We know better now. It threw light on the Bible. It glorified it.

What is the Higher Criticism?

All this work of revision, the comparing of manuscripts, the correction of texts, the determining of readings—in other words, the criticism of the text of the Bible—is called the Lower Criticism.

You can see that this is a highly important and necessary work. It makes for the Bible's accuracy and truthfulness. It is a scraping away of the barnacles. It is a friendly service. It exalts the Bible.

Now, the Higher Criticism is likewise a necessary and friendly office. Instead of dealing with texts, now our critic deals with books, and literary characteristics, and authorship, and age, and viewpoint. He may make mistakes. He may be an enemy. He may sometimes hurt—the faithful surgeon does. But, generally, he is a friend on a mission of truth and love. The Higher Critic is the Bible's friend.

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One of the supreme hours of my life came when, after the dream of years, I first stood before an old-world cathedral. There above me towered up into the sky, until its towers were lost in the clouds, one of the greatest of Gothic temples. I was awed into silence. Mystery sat upon me as a garment. Hoary age, grandeur of conception, noble art, and historic association united to deepen my reverence and heighten my admiration.

I fell in with a strange old man. He was of a bygone age. He was a peasant and loved the minster. He warned me against guides and guide-books, and, above all, against the clergy, all of whom, he said, had conspired together to traduce the minster and rob it of its antiquity and glory. Then I listened to his interpretation.

He said, this is the oldest church in the world. Paul, in one of his journeys to Spain, came into Britain and preached here. His bones rest here. Alfred laid its corner stone and was its architect. It is the largest temple on the earth. It has never been in need of repair

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nor added to. It was all built and finished in seven years. There is not a flaw in it to this day. The old man was so sweet, and sincere, and earnest, and his faith was so simple, that I loved him.

In other days I took my book on the cathedral, written by its dean, and, under a guide, I began to study it. I found out that the cathedral was six hundred years in building; that it did not go back to Alfred, but only to the Norman; and that it was the third temple built on the spot—the first one being an altar, where our heathen ancestors sacrificed children to Wodin. Many architects had planned. Many builders had wrought. It was really a patchwork, or crazy-quilt, in architecture. The nave was Norman; the transepts were early English; the chapter house and sacristy were decorative; the chapel was perpendicular. Of course Paul was never in England, and his bones did not rest there. A hundred things the old man had said were only legends and guesses. He did not know. But the cathedral was there. To tell the truth

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about its building, to know its true history, did not destroy the cathedral, nor rob it of its massive grandeur. Nay, the true story added to its charm. It was not a miracle, it was a growth. It was not a curiosity, it was a history. As I came to understand it, I was baptized anew with a love for our English race. I was thrilled with the struggle of English faith. I saw as never before the story of Christian progress, and victory of the cross over animalism, and ignorance, and sin. The truth made it a far grander cathedral than the myth ever did.

This is a parable. The Bible is the cathedral, nobler than an erection of man, "the scale of whose proportions are mystical, strange, divine." The peasant man is the traditions that have grown up around the Bible. The first people who had the Bible were fresh from Romanism, with her legends and superstitions, and sense of wonder, and marvelous. They transferred their allegiance from an ancient church to an ancient book. They invested it with all the mystery and miracle they had

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once attributed to the church. The church was errorless—the Bible was errorless. The church was infallible, and they put over against it an infallible book. The church went back to Peter—their Bible went back to Moses. The church had a miraculous beginning—the Bible had. God dictated the account of creation and early history to Moses, and, along with it, an account of his own death. They sought to magnify all the wonder element. Joshua bade the sun stand still, and it obeyed. Jonah lived three days inside of a fish. All these and a hundred other stories were told about the Bible. And to question them was infidelity; and to seek to know the facts was to dishonor the Bible. All this was just like the old man at the minster. It was childlike and simple-hearted, but it was dangerous. It gave the enemies of the Bible their chance to attack it and turn many away from its ancient and divine ministry.

Then the wise and learned man came. Generally, like the dean of the cathedral, he loved his Bible, and gave his life to know it.

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He said, "Let us find out what the Bible itself says. Let us find out the truth," and he began to spend his life on the study of the Bible itself. He had found out that a hundred popular traditions were fancies, and he is finding out a thousand truths about the Bible that men never knew before. Many of our old uncritical notions about the Bible may perish, but the Bible remains. And I love it and cling to it, not for what men have thought about it, nor for the manner of its making, but for itself. Some of the moss may be scraped away, but the "Impregnable Rock" remains. Indeed, the Bible is growing on us under the process. It is looming up grander than we knew. The pyramids of Egypt grow larger when we clear away the sands of the desert. The Sphinx is one hundred times larger than the first travelers knew, now that the excavators have uncovered it. The Bible is tenfold more wonderful and true now that the mistakes about it are found out. Truth is grander than fiction.

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I cannot tell you what Higher Criticism¹ has already found out about the Bible. It would of itself take many days. I will only bring you samples to show you that our fears of it are unfounded, and to reassure you that the "foundations of God stand sure"; and to make you see that, when they are done, we will not only have the Bible, but that really for the first time in the world the people will really possess a Bible, sure, certain, impregnable, and unassailable, that cannot be denied or put aside.

We have found out:

1. That the Bible is a library, and not a single book. It is made up of sixty-six books, written in different languages, and running through some fifteen hundred years. It contains history, poetry, drama, sermons, orations, letters, biographies, stories, proverbs, and visions. It is a body of literature.

¹ Read Prof. Terry's "Moses and the Prophets" and Prof. Nash's "Higher Criticism of the New Testament." Also Washington Gladden's "Who Wrote the Bible?"

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These facts once evident, it throws a flood of light on its meaning and interpretation.

It gets rid of that old typewriter idea of its making, which said God dictated every word of it, and an inspired man was less than other men, an automaton. The world has had Bibles written by dictation, and they bear the marks of it. The Mormon Bible is a dictation. The Mohammedan Bible is a dictation. And they show it. They are wooden, dead, human—their writers were automata. I do not believe in inspired machines. I have never found much inspiration in a typewriter. You can dictate a letter about wool, or paint, or stocks; but you cannot dictate a letter to your mother. You cannot dictate a book or a poem. You cannot dictate your love for your child. You cannot dictate a prayer. You cannot dictate a sermon. A dictated sermon is a dead sermon. All these words that express your heart, and love, and aspiration, and tenderness, and soul are born, not made; thought out, felt out, yearned out, prayed out, not said. They are inspirations, not dic-

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tations. Inspiration is a breath, a touch, a thrill, a mood within. They make men more, not less; they open eyes, not close them; they attune ears, not stop them; they quicken faculties, not blunt them; they intensify the powers of a man, not drug them. I am glad our Bible is the highest utterance of holy men "whose hearts God had touched." It is a grander conception than the mechanical idea and makes the Bible grander and diviner.

To know that the Bible is a great literature gives the key of its understanding, or, rather, many keys. I do not know of a greater enemy of the Bible than the old question all of us have heard a thousand times, "Do you not believe what the Bible says?" when the person who asked it meant to put you to confusion because you have said you did not think that the world was made in six days, or you did not believe in total depravity, or the doctrine of predestination. And then he would pick out some isolated text, whether out of a poem, a sermon, or a story, and

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quote it and say, "The Bible teaches it, and I believe the Bible."

So do I. But I do not believe what some men say about the Bible. I will not yield to ignorance. The Bible is a literature. It is not all history. It is not a text-book. It is not a hand-book of ready knowledge. It is not an answer to ten thousand hard questions. We have such books, but nobody takes their glib infallibility for a Bible. The Bible is literature.

Its history I will read and interpret as history. Its poetry I will read and understand as poetry. Its stories I will read and understand as stories. I will not interpret a poem literally. I will not take the letter of a story as a fact. I will take the truth it illustrates as the fact. I will use both my intelligence and my common sense. I will not read David's saying, "The Lord is my Shepherd"—poetry as it is—as prose and say the Bible teaches that God is a literal shepherd and a man is a sheep. I will not read the story of the garden of Eden as dry-as-dust history.

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I will read the poetry as the language of imagination.

You have heard men say that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still in the valley of Ajalon, and that it obeyed, and the day was made longer for his battle. And they told us that the Bible said so in the book of Joshua. The Revised Bible shows us better. The book of Joshua is literature. In the description of the battle the writer quotes a verse of an old battle-hymn from the book of Jasher, which reads:

*“Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
And thou moon in the valley of Ajalon.”*

It is a quotation; it is a poem; and the writer of the history used it with never a thought that after generations would take it all for literal prose. This illustrates a thousand cases of making the Bible say things it never meant to say. Men had not found out it was literature. Knowing that the Bible is literature, and reading poems as poems, history as history, and stories as stories, a thousand difficulties disappear, a thousand

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beauties appear, and the Bible grows on our confidence and love. To understand the Bible is to enthrone it. I am grateful to the men who have made it clear and plain. They are giving us a nobler Bible.

2. Another great truth we have found out about the Bible through this new study and criticism, is that the Bible is a growth, a history. There is progress in revelation.

In its very beginnings it was very crude, because men were crude. Just as fast as they could receive it, God goes on to give them higher idea of the truth. The Bible is the record of the evolution of religion. When Moses began with those slaves in Egypt they were very ignorant. They did not know what was right, or what was wrong; they did not have any true worship; they did not know that there was only one God, and they did not know about his great, rich, loving nature. Now how do we teach children history, religion, geography, geology? It would be perfectly absurd to take a little boy of four into a theological school and give him lec-

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tures on divinity. It is perfectly useless to bring Agassiz into the kindergarten and tell him to explain to the children about the creation of the world. Instead of that, the mother and the kindergarten teachers begin with the very a, b, c's. They adapt truth to the children's minds. And as the child grows in intelligence, and increases in understanding and heart power, the truth grows and enlarges until at last the child becomes a scholar. That is what was done in the making of the Bible. Altars were built and sacrifices permitted—for this was the only religious language the crude people knew. Then great symbols were introduced. The first one was the tabernacle of Moses. Later when this nomadic people became a settled people and had a government, David and Solomon built the temple, with its court opening into court. On the outside were the great multitudes and the doors were shut—it was a symbol telling them that sin separated men from God. Inside of this was a Holy of Holies, into which the High Priest only could go, and he

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but once a year, and there was the place and altar that was dedicated to God—it was a symbol impressing a whole nation with the majesty and sacredness of God.¹

Then the prophets came, one by one, and began to translate the meaning of these sacred symbols into speech. They preached to the people about justice, and mercy, and honesty, and cleanness, and righteousness, and holiness. They were the preachers and statesmen of the nation. They founded schools which became colleges of culture and centers of religion. Finally these grew into synagogues, and every Jewish hamlet had its church, and every Jewish family had its worship.

Poets, likewise, had risen among them and set to music their wonderful history, the wonderful care of God, and all their hopes and fears. The nation became one great singing-school for the singing of these poems. Musicians would accompany on a lute, and a whole com-

- "Bible Studies"—H. W. Beecher.

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pany of young men and maidens would sing these national religious hymns. They became the liturgy of the people.

When at length from temple, sacrifice, and ceremony, from priest and prophet, God had developed within these people the great ideas of right and wrong, of truth and justice, of conscience and God, the fullness of time had been attained. Jesus came with his life, with his teaching about God, with his divine deeds—the perfect revelation—the truth manifested in the flesh, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

The account of all this long and tedious and painful development is written down in the Bible. In the Bible you find the laws of these people in different stages of their development. Their poems and sermons of the old prophets, the visions of the old men. It is the literature of the soul of the Hebrew people through all the long years and all their adversities and all their glories. As Lessing said, “The Bible is the history of the religious education of man.”

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Now, if this is true, it is not only a grand conception, but throws new light upon the understanding of the scriptures. Men like Mr. Ingersoll have come to us and told us that the Bible is a wicked book, because, in the days of the Judges, its heroes were licentious and cruel, and vengeful in the days of the early kings; that David is called a man after God's own heart, and David was a libertine; that Jacob is counted a prince in Israel, and Jacob was a knave; that Solomon is counted a wise man, and Solomon was an Oriental despot, with an Oriental harem; and that if David, Solomon, and Jacob were living now, they would be sent to the penitentiary. "What kind of a Bible," they have asked, "is this which sets the crown of honor upon the brow of such men and such ethics?" When they ask that, they ask a silly thing. We have an answer.

If we believed, as our fathers did, that the Bible was an infallible book, and that one part of it was just as true and valuable as every other part, and that a text out of

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the Judges represented the truth of God as much as a text out of the Gospels, we would be in confusion. We could not answer them. But with this higher view that the Bible is a history of the religious development of the race, it all becomes clear. We interpret what we tell our children in the light of what that truth leads to when they are grown. The things we teach in the kindergarten are but fragmentary, and find their fulfillment in what we teach in the colleges. What God taught those men, in the morning of the world, was the best truth they were able to receive at that time. It was God's accommodating Himself to the crude intelligence of men. It was far better than anything those people had in that time, and it was a school that was leading them on toward the truth.

All the Bible points to the full revelation in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the standard. We will not go back to the book of Joshua for our ethics. We will not go back to Moses for our righteousness. We will not go back

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to David or Jacob as our highest types. We will call no man master save Jesus Christ. In the light of what they could do, and in the light of how God was leading the race on, these old biographies, and these old laws and poems, and these old failures, and these old victories, and these old heart burnings, and inspirations, are interesting and they are divine. And we see that the sweep of the divine care is longer than we knew. And the patience and the leading of the divine revelation is grander than we dreamed. And with Cowper we sing:

*“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*“Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.*

*“His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”*

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3. Modern Bible study finds the Bible distinctively a religious literature. It is not a text-book on chemistry, or astronomy, or geology. It is a history of the soul of man and its development, not of his body or his world. It is the history of the creature rather than creation. The New Testament is not authority on government. It is authority on religion. Paul is not a professor of metaphysics, he is a teacher of religion. Moses is not authority on geology and biology, he is authority on moral law. Genesis does not teach, does not pretend to teach, cosmogony; it does teach God. Paul did not know that the earth was a sphere; he died supposing it a plane. He never dreamed of the Western hemisphere. He never heard of the Copernican system. He had no knowledge of creation by evolution. If he had made reference, for purposes of illustration, to the flatness of the earth, or the sun's revolving about the earth, or creation by fiat, it would not invalidate what he taught about sin, and righteousness, and immortality. His message was religious.

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His vision was religious. His inspiration was a religious inspiration. We would not expect him to know about undiscovered lands, simply because he did know about new and great religious truths.

Take John Wesley for example, scholar of Oxford, citizen of the eighteenth century, and preacher of Christ, and the greatest winner of souls since Paul. If ever there was an inspired preacher in the modern world it was John Wesley. He preached a celebrated sermon on "The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes." It is one of the greatest statements of man's religious accountability and God's providence that ever fell upon human ears. It stirred the conscience of England like a trumpet's challenge. Yet, as an account of the physical phenomenon called an earthquake, it is old wives' fables. For illustration of his thesis he took the current teaching of his day, which has passed away before modern knowledge. His thesis is as true and ringing as ever; his illustration is old lumber and a curiosity. John Wesley was authority on

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religion, not on earthquakes. Nobody denies the truth of his religion because his illustrations are outgrown. Every sermon you ever heard, every sermon preached to-day on the earth, will have in it illustrations from current ideas that will be outgrown to-morrow; but in so far as these sermons teach great spiritual lessons, they will be true a hundred years from now. Shakespeare's mistaken notions of geography do not invalidate Shakespeare's Hamlet. Because John Bunyan did not know modern science, and was mistaken about some of his scientific ideas, does not destroy the religious truth of his wonderful allegory. Next to the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress is still the most popular book in the world.

Now turn to the Bible and to Genesis. Genesis is not authority on geology. Genesis does not tell, and does not know, how the world was made. Genesis is not interested in that problem. If that had been the question, Genesis would never have been written. The Hebrews were not a scientific people. They cared noth-

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ing for questions of philosophy. They accepted without question and with little interest the philosophic statements of their age. The Chaldæans and Egyptians had an account of creation. It was like Genesis, for the Hebrew mind did not question it. And yet the Genesis story differs from theirs, as day differs from night. The Hebrew was religious. His problem was not how, but Who; not the method, but the Maker; not the way, but the Cause. He had found out God. So this Genesis author quickly ran over the age-old story of creation, and transfused it with power and transfigured it with truth, and wrote over it, and in it, and back of it his great revelation, "In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth." No more demiurges for him. No more baking mud and spontaneous generation for him. No more myth and silly superstition for him. No more materialism and atheism for him. He left that for Greeks, and Romans, and Chaldæans, and moderns. He knew better. He had vision. He had a revelation. He shouted out,

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“In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth,” and there it stands and shines forever. The old cosmogony has passed away, and would be forgotten save that it is embalmed, as fossils in the rocks, in this religious and inspired story of religion. But that truth shines with undimmed splendor. Nobody has ever been able to gainsay it. The modern world builds on it. It is still our Bible; and it will be truth forever! Nobody can discredit my Bible because it does not teach cosmogony. It never set out to do so. Let evolution come. I rejoice in it. Let new truths dawn on men forever. I am not afraid. In the realm of religion my Bible stands true. The world will never go back on its matchless statement, “In the beginning, God.” Oh, friends, let not blind guides lead you into the ditch with little and mechanical definitions of inspiration! Do not think that God is such a one as we are. He knows His business. His truths will never make war on each other. He will not lead honest men astray with will-o'-the-wisps.

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*"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be:
But they are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they!"*

Afraid of the Higher Criticism? Is the slave afraid of Lincoln who comes to set him free? Afraid of investigation? Is David afraid of Samuel when he comes to anoint him King? Afraid of more light! Is the plant, half out of the seed, afraid of the sun that comes to free it from its cerements of clay, and lift it up, singing, into blossom and into a full-grown tree? Afraid of the scholar? Is the maiden afraid of her beloved when he comes with ring and orange-blossoms to claim his bride? Afraid of the fires of testing? Is the silver afraid of the smelter? Is the diamond afraid of the lapidary who comes to bind it with gold on the hand of love? I know there are crude bunglers and false prophets who, in the guise of students, may seek the Bible's overthrow. But they are rare. There has been but one Benedict Arnold in all our history. And, besides, they are im-

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potent. Treason is not popular. Assassination is a crime. "Truth, like diamonds, is brighter for polishing." Bread is better for kneading. Jesus on the cross was exalted. The Bible is enthroned by criticism.

Already dawns the time of its new coronation. Once the scholar sneered at it. Now it is text-book in every college. No man can be a scholar unless he knows it. The poets tip their fancies with its beauty, and orators crown their oration with its golden words. The people have never ceased to love it, and now they are going to know it. The solace of the aged, the hope of the disconsolate, the inspiration of the living, the comfort of the dying, it has been and increasingly will be for the children of men "The Word of God." And our children's children, loving it as much as their fathers, but knowing it better, will say when they are old, out of a long and sweet experience, like one of old:

*"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,
And a light unto my path."*

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How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, and publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

ISAIAH 52:7.

There is not a hamlet where poor peasants congregate, but by one means and another, a Church-Apparatus has been got together; roofed edifice with revenues and belfries; pulpit, reading-desk, with books and methods; possibility in short, and strict prescription, That a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to men. It is beautiful; even in its great obscuration and decadence, it is among the beautifullest, most touching objects one sees on the earth.

CARLYLE.

*O Thou, whose own vast temple stands,
Built over earth and sea,
Accept the walls that human hands
Have raised to worship Thee.*

*May erring minds, that worship here,
Be thought the better way;
And they who mourn, and they who fear,
Be strengthened as they pray.*

*May faith grow firm, and love grow warm,
And pure devotion rise,
While, round these hallowed walls, the storm
Of earth-born passion dies.*

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

VIII

Why Young Men Go to Church



HE young man who never goes to church has been talking a good deal lately. The public prints have been full of interviews, in which elaborate reasons are

given why he does not go to church.

I take it as a ground for optimism that the young fellow feels called upon to make so elaborate an explanation. It speaks volumes for the place of the church in the reverence and affection of society when those who ignore her ministrations take the trouble to send so carefully thought out an excuse. Once the shoe was on the other foot. Once men had to make apologies for the church, and explain to their friends and a scoffing public why they did attend her worship.

Just about a hundred years ago now, even in Puritan New England, young men openly

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sneered at religion and loudly denounced the church. It was thought a reproach among public men and college students to be thought a Christian.

Lyman Beecher tells us of Yale College and New England in that age, and certainly the burden of proof was not then with the young man who did not go to church. Times are changed. To-day it is the non-churchgoing man who offers apology, and even he, though he may find fault with the church, speaks reverently of religion, and professes high admiration for Christ. This whole discussion is, as I see it, a tribute to the growing power and secure place of the church in the community life of the nation.

We must take the sayings of this young man who never goes to church with a grain of salt. He is talking a good deal to hear himself. Far be it from me to intimate that he has not a grain of truth in his bushel of chaff. To my mind it is certain that he tells church people a good many facts, unpalatable as they may seem. I am glad he has spoken out,

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for it will be a good thing for the minister to see himself as others see him.

There is too much truth in the statement that the church is not alive to the needs of young men. Sometimes she has talked overmuch of heaven and paid too little attention to earth. The young man is doubtless right when he tells us that there is a good deal of poor preaching in the churches. Most of us could bear personal testimony on this point.

Some preachers, like some editors, are too dogmatic, and from insufficient data give utterance to infallible opinions. Some preachers are like some young men—they say foolish things. There are little preachers, just as there are little lawyers, and little doctors, and little editors.

I will not deny the charge, there are some lazy preachers. The pulpit has its share of human nature. But, surprising as it may seem, I know of no person in all the world harder driven with work than the Christian minister. I believe it would help us to under-

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stand his work if we were to stop and set down the programme of his duties.

He is an organizer and leader of men as truly as the captain of industry. There is this difference, however—the men he has to organize into an army and lead to victory are not on pay, but are volunteers, and, moreover, they are his own employers. If he succeeds, it must be by persuasion and inspiration, and not by force. He cannot use vinegar in his business, but consumes a great deal of sugar.

Then he is a prophet, and when the clock strikes he must rise and on old themes speak fresh, inspiring messages to audiences as large and equal in intelligence to the audiences before which the lecturer appears once a year, or the orator a score of times in all his life. There is this difference again—the preacher must do this with the same audience from three to five times a week.

Then he is the parish friend and physician. After all, there is a propriety in the Western custom of dubbing every minister “Doc-

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tor." He is a soul doctor. The healing of hearts is not the least of his business. He stands with the dying; he advises the perplexed; he consoles the heartsore; he puts new hope into lives that are sunless. His work begins with early morn and lasts until midnight; his week has seven days in it instead of six. His working life is short, for the cry is for young men; the burden requires the strength of life's noonday. If there is any man in the community who knows about flabby muscles, and tired brain, and weary body, it is the minister. Nobody would have such sympathy for the young man who complains of overwork and need of rest.

Yes, the young man tells the truth, but he does not tell all the truth. The truth is that the churches are not perfect; the truth also is that they are trying, with all their might and main, to improve and more perfectly adapt themselves to their mission. The truth is that some ministers are lazy, and often ministers preach poorly; but the truth also is that most ministers are workers, and that

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they often preach well. It is true that when Sunday comes men are weary and tired out; but there is another truth, which the young man has forgotten, or never knew, and that is, for the man who is weary and worn out with care and strain of workaday there is rest, and strength, and courage, and new life in the house of God. Men who go to church are stronger all the week.

Then that other objection that we hear so much made of, that so many young men do not go to church, needs to be weighed before it is taken for pure gold. If we go to the high schools of the country we find that two-thirds of all the graduating classes are girls. One boy to every three girls take high-school courses. But would anybody argue that the high schools are useless or hopelessly behind the times?

“The best measure,” somebody has said, “of any people is the way they treat a great man.” Another very accurate measurement of a man is his attitude toward the high and the serious and the ideal. Truth and worth are

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not always found on the side of majorities. Man is intelligence, but he is an animal also. With many of us the animal is stronger than the spiritual. Music, and eloquence, and poetry, and pictures only appeal to those who have some knowledge of their language. From the beginning until now it has only been a slow-growing minority that has kept music alive, and art alive, and literature alive, and Christianity alive. I am not discouraged because so many young men have nothing to do with the church. I am rather encouraged, and filled with wonder and awe, that so many young men are in the churches. But the most grievous fault of this young man who never goes to church lies in the fact that he assumes to speak for all young men. There are young men who never go to church and who give reasons for it. There is a far larger multitude of young men who do not go to church regularly and who have never given any reason for it. Then there is another larger company of young men who do go to church and who have reasons for going

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to church. I suppose it will come as a kind of a shock to our talking friends to find out that there are young men who go to church. And yet more young men, absolutely and relatively, are in attendance upon the church than ever before in human history. I cannot prove this by statistics, but I do not believe this statement will be questioned. I picked up the year-books of two of our leading denominations and read there that the number of men in active membership ranged from one-third of the membership to three-sevenths of the membership. In no case did the male membership quite equal the female membership, though in some cases it almost equaled it. There are not as many men in attendance as women, but almost as many. At any rate it is high time to remember the man who goes to church.

More men are engaged in Christian work than the world ever saw—I mean not only absolutely but relatively more. Look at the Young Men's Christian Associations, the World Wide Student Movements, the Young

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People's Societies, the Men's Clubs. And to me it is a sign of encouragement to see so vast a number, so large a percentage of our young men go to church. Why do young men go to church? What can the church do for a young man?

What is the church?

To that question we get not one reply, but many.

We have some one hundred and fifty different churches in this country, and new ones spring up every year. Each one believes itself to be the best church, and not a few believe themselves to be the only church.

One definition finds the heart of the church in its organization. It places emphasis on order and government. Here belong the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church, each one governed by bishops, and each claiming apostolic succession, and each one denying the claim of the other. Their definition of the church, however, is the same. It is, the church is a monarchy, whose ruler is a bishop, who receives

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his authority from Saint Peter, who was consecrated bishop by Jesus. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church. I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon the earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon the earth shall be loosed in Heaven." On that one text, according to this definition, rests all the fabric of the Christian church. Other New Testament statements that seem to teach a contrary doctrine are explained away. Besides, the claim that Peter was ever in Rome, much less Bishop of Rome, rests on unverified tradition. A rather small foundation-stone, we would say. Yet on it these churches are built, and the claim is made that the essential fact of the church is its government by bishops. And all other so-called churches, who have not this rule of the apostolic bishop, are not churches at all, but only "sects." It is the old argument on which monarchy rests. "The divine right of kings," it is called. It claims that one man is born to

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rule, and all other men are born to obey. Without a king there is no government at all. Republics are anarchy. This doctrine will never gain very wide acceptance in a republic. We do not believe any form of government to be divine. Government is a human institution, and may be a monarchy, or a republic, or a democracy. Our fathers, who built a state without a king, gave us a church without a bishop.

To-day we build our minster and gather into gorgeous churches—it is well; but the first church has neither tower, nor spire, nor roof, nor gable. Like the “body of her Lord which slept in a borrowed tomb,” this church met in a garret, a cellar of a borrowed building, or an upper room in some peasant’s house. To-day we have our church organizations after three great models—the Episcopacy, the Presbytery, and the Democracy. Any one of these ways is good, provided they who hold it do not imagine it is the only way. In the days of the early church there were neither popes, nor bishops, nor

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elders, nor *sýnods*, nor councils, nor ministers. All believers were ministers. In one place there was need of someone to administer alms to the poor, and deacons were appointed. In another place, where the church was made up mostly of Jews, these men were called the presbyters or elders. In another place they were called *episcopoi*. But they were all the same men. Each church did as seemed best in its own eyes, and there was no set form of organization. We have the church to-day. We had the church then. The soul of the church is not its organization.

Another definition finds the crux of the church in its creed. Here is where the Evangelical churches have been wont to place emphasis. They read our text differently. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church." The rock is not Peter himself, but his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." This is by no means a certain exegesis. This is as slim a foundation to build an exclusive claim on as Rome's interpretation. It is as narrow to

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say a church is not a real church which is not an orthodox church as it is to say it is not a real church unless it is in the line of apostolic succession. Is not the Quaker Church, with its teaching of peace and with its marvelous life of the spirit, a Christian church? Is not the Unitarian Church, with such prophets of God as Edward Everett Hale and James Martineau, a Christian church?

I believe in creeds. But what is a creed?

A creed is the skeleton of truth. You have seen a skeleton, and you know how gruesome it is. If I had here the skeleton of a little baby, and should wrap it up in finest silk, there is not a mother in the land who would take it from me. But if I had a little baby here, and it was crying, there is not a mother in the land who would not take it, and soothe it, and lead it smiling into sleep. But, mother, you want your baby to have a skeleton, don't you? But you want it to be on the inside, covered up with flesh and blood. The only skeleton you want is a live skeleton. The only creed you want is a live creed. And the only

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way to keep it alive is to keep it growing. A creed, then, is not sacred bones to be worshiped, but it is a backbone for life.

The creed we call the Apostle's is a poem sung by the faith of all Christendom. But it is three hundred years younger than the church. The Nicæan Creed is one of the bulwarks of the faith, erected in a dark and stormy time. The Westminster Confession is an honorable landmark in the history of the Protestant religion. It is antiquated, hoary, honorable, like an old battle flag. Never try to patch it and hide the hole in it, or never try to sew a piece on to make it tell the story of our larger faith. To-day give us a new flag to march by that has all the stars in it. But the old one, with but thirteen stars, preserve it, and keep it sacredly. Leave it for our children to venerate for the glory of its time. But the early church had no Westminster Confession. It had not even the short Apostle's Creed. People came into the church then not by some definition of Christ. All who love Christ, and in his spirit would carry

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on his life and work, were enrolled. They had a church then. The life of the church lies not in its creed.

A third definition of the church, very prevalent among many people, puts all the emphasis on feeling. Experience is the corner-stone of the church. The church is composed of people who have been born again, and who also remember their own birthday. The church is a home for saints. If you ask them about children, they either say they have no place in the church, or they let them in through the back door, or let them stand in the vestibule. They are really never in unless they first run off and grow wicked, and then repent, and get converted in a dramatic sort of way.

The trouble with this notion is it is too narrow for the facts. Jesus said, "Of such are the Kingdom of Heaven," and He was speaking of children. Everybody is not converted in a certain memorable way. Most people cannot remember their own birth-hour. Paul could. There is no record that John could.

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Generally speaking, the worse a man is the more dramatic his conversion. The better he is the less unknown it is. "Ye cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth," Christ said of the spiritual life.

All these notions of the church are half truths. They are exclusive definitions. A church has organizations, but its genius lies not in any particular form of organization. There is no more a one divine form of government in church than in state. A monarchy may be a church, but a democracy is a church also.

A church has a creed, but the creed is not the heart of the church. It is its description, and aim, and ideal. A church has feeling and experience, and by experience becomes wise. But the life of the church is not its emotion. Let us find an inclusive statement. Let us go back to our text. But let us approach it from the other side, from the historical side.

The church already existed in the world. It went back to Moses anyway, and among the Jewish people was the pre-eminent institution.

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By birth, by parental consecration, and by his own choice, Jesus was a member of the Jewish church. In the synagogue he had sat among the elders of the people. Jesus never criticised the Jewish church; though he did denounce its hierarchy. Jesus never sought to destroy the church; "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill," was his platform.

The synagogue was the only church Jesus knew. What was the synagogue? A monarchy? There was not a bishop in it; it was ruled by elders, and every wise man was eligible to the office.

A hard and fast doctrine? Men were members in good standing who believed in the resurrection, and also men who denied immortality. Jesus was always crying out against the Pharisees with their traditions, which they tried to make laws, and their ceremonies, which did duty for spirituality. Jesus suffered for his opinions.

Was it a company of folk who had been miraculously changed? The idea of instantaneous conversion was not even heard of.

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It included children and was a family church, in which all had a right by birth and training.

Moreover, the Hebrew synagogue was an educational institution. Jesus learned to read during the week in the same room and from the same rabbi who taught him religion on the Sabbath. The heart of the Jewish church lay in its teaching. Bred into Jesus was the notion that the church is the school of religion, open for the spiritual education of God's children. Who has a right in it? All who want to learn. For what did those Jewish men go to church? For worship, culture of heart, and attainment in spiritual life.

The whole ministry and teaching of Jesus was in accord with this idea. He was a prophet, not a priest. He organized no worship; he wrote no creed. He was a democrat, not an aristocrat. He was a teacher, not an administrator. He went about telling the truth and doing good. He refused office to Zebedee's sons, saying, "It is the Gentile

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way to lord it over them; but he who would be great among you, let him be the servant of all."

With that history, and the whole life and teaching of Jesus in mind, let us come to our famous text, "Upon this rock will I build My church," and find in it the making of a pope, if you can. Such an idea never occurs to me when I hear the words. No more would I ever think that Jesus was founding a church on the confession of His divinity. Jesus at the time was thwarted by a dead orthodoxy, and was trying to free men from the letter that killeth.

Peter had been at school with the Master for two years. Peter was still a frail man, and was yet to fall and be reproved. But Peter was growing wiser. He was beginning to have insight, spiritual vision. Jesus said, "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee." In this school Peter's spiritual faculties were becoming clear. This one gleam was a harbinger of greater things to come. And Jesus, the schoolmaster, like human

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teachers who see in their pupils signs of the scholar, was transported with joy. His work was beginning to show. His faith and patience had not been in vain, and He burst out, "That's it, Simon, spiritual knowledge is the thing. On that rests the church. You will grow from more to more in spiritual discernment. You will not need to walk, as the Scribes teach, like horses by the bit, but freely, by your own conscience. You, yourself, will know good and evil. Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Religion is not a matter of priests and creeds; it is not forms and ceremonies and rules and restrictions; it is the life of God in the individual soul. It is vision, it is liberty, it is the spiritual life. My church is a school for the training of spiritual life.

The church, then, whatsoever its name or organization or creed, is the school for the training of men and women and children in character. And it is a Christian church when

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Jesus Christ is the master, and men are being taught and trained in the spiritual knowledge and the fine life He revealed.

In the old thinking, creation was a mechanical act, in six days complete once forever. In the new thinking, creation is an evolution, and it is yet far from its goal. In the old thinking, salvation was a gift from God, great as a storm in the sky, and almost as loud. In the new thinking, salvation is character, and character is growth. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." In the old thinking, the church was a government. The Romanists boldly claimed it was the Kingdom of God; the pope was vicegerent; the priest held the keys of life and death, of sin and forgiveness; salvation was a matter of church standing. In the church, and obedient to the priest, a man was saved. Outside of the church there was no salvation. The Protestant world did not believe that the church was coterminous with the Kingdom of God; but they have taught that the church at least was the gateway into the

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Kingdom of God. They have not clearly seen how anybody could become a member of the Kingdom of God except by way of the church, unless he was a baby, or an idiot, or probably a heathen. "He that goeth in except by the door is a thief and a robber." In the old way of thinking, then, the church was a divine government; according to the new thinking the church is a school, religion is culture, and salvation is development. In religion we are chary of that word culture. We do not quite know what it is, and we are afraid of it, whatever it is. We are afraid it is a sort of veneer. Culture has been impracticable; generally it does not declare dividends. Generally, culture has been haughty and aristocratic. We cry, "A reformer was Luther, a miner's son, and not Erasmus, the first scholar of Europe." "The patriot was Henry, the country lawyer, and not Randolph, the university's pride." And yet culture is a great and noble word, and, according to the New Testament, salvation is culture.

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If we stick to ordinary speech we will not go astray. If we use the word in the field and garden, and speak of rose culture and apple culture, we have a very definite meaning.

We see in a flash the gardener with his hoe, cutting down the weeds, stirring the earth, enriching it with fertilizers, now giving water, now shade, now tying fast, now pruning, and at last we see the stages by which the wild rose of the moorland has blossomed into the glorious beauty of the Jacqueminot. In the orchard the wild crab has been made into a Ben Davis; in the field the wild rice has been made into the golden wheat and the dwarfed maize into the giant corn. Culture means growth, progress, improvements, enrichment. We all believe in culture for the husbandman.

We all believe in culture for horses and animals. It is the way we have come from the animal, not much bigger or faster than a sheep, to the modern thoroughbred, with his marvelous record for fleetness. It is the way we have come from the wolf to the St. Ber-

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nard; from the wild cattle to the Durham and Jersey. Culture is the watchword of the herdsman.

And so men lead forth music from metal and wood and skin: so the great organ hath come from the forest and up out of the mines singing; and so the old moss-grown tree at last finds its soul and melody in the violin. Culture means liberty, refinement, and transfiguration. The organ or violin is not simply the block of wood painted, or veneered, or rubbed with pumice stone. It is the block of wood awakened from its slumber of a century and quickened until every fibre cries out. It has become a new, nobler, divine thing. It has been given a soul. Now, is not culture a noble thing? It is just exactly this we mean when we speak of the culture of men and women—the liberation of the soul and its deepening; the refinement and awakening of the higher nature; the strengthening of power; the cutting off of vice or weakness; the resurrection of the angel. So that by the culture of a human being we mean “the un-

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foldment and enrichment of the man by conforming to and carrying out the laws of his nature." The full and perfect expression of all that is good in him. The attainment of his largest and noblest possibility; and the result is a strong, broad, rich, human life. Is not culture, then, salvation?

If I saw a little child asleep or laughing in a burning building, and at the risk of my life I should rush in and bear the child to safety, everybody would say that I had saved the child. Or if I snatched him from the path just as the rattlesnake was about to spring, everybody would hail me as the savior of the child. If I were to find the child in a den of infamy, in a house of sin and shame, among human beings who make prey of innocence and merchandise of virtue, where there was only temptation and ignorant and besotted living, and were to love that child, and teach it pure words, and noble thoughts, and high ideals, and lead it along the path of development until he should escape temptations without, and appetites within, and become a

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splendid, noble man, would I not be the savior of the child?

We come back to our definition, "The church is the school for the training of Christian character."

What is a school?

Every village schoolhouse is perpetual witness that man is mind and can think the thoughts of the Infinite. Every village church is perpetual witness that man is soul and can have communion with the great over-soul. The church is school of the soul.

Here is the eternal witness that man is a soul. Here is the Father's house, and here He keeps open house for His children. Here men hear words that draw them away from houses and lands and above them; that drown out sorrow and set in their skies lamps of hope. Here are set forth the laws of moral excellence so bewitchingly that you and I feel the better angels of our nature awakened from their long sleep, and we set our faces toward the home of the soul. Here we hear no more the harsh words of the street and market-

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place, but instead here is spoken the language of the heart.

In the school men have text-books. Here it is the Bible. In the school men have certain great principles and purposes. Here it is the creed. In the school is the teacher. In the church the teachers are gathered.

Here cometh Moses to be our lawgiver. Without law there is a famine in the field; chaos in the skies; rebellion in the home and sin in the heart. We live by law. This nation once came near death. Had she gone down to ashes, the historian must have written, "Anarchy slew her." As a people we are not yet from under the shadow of a crime against our rulers. When we speak of our martyrs, we bow our heads in the dust, and confess that our own lawlessness in the home, and the school, and the market-place has blossomed into violence. For years we have sowed the dragons' teeth. At last our passions have overleaped themselves and but yesterday slew our gentlest of rulers. In every church let Moses appear and teach us.

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Here cometh Elias the prophet. There is no power on earth equal to winsome speech. By it tender maidens are won to love and hardship and self-denial. By it revolutions are kindled and the passion of war curbed into the power of peace. When the church has opened a pulpit she has set up a throne. And when the king shall come he shall rule the city. Laying his hands on the rising generation he shall unlock for them the gates of destiny.

Here, chiefest of all, cometh Christ. He is son; the rest are reflected light. "And he shall save the people from their sins." Coming here our young men and maidens, like the young man whom Jesus loved, shall find hung clear and shining before them the pattern of eternal life. Here the robber shall find Paradise, the publican a friend, and the pure-hearted Nathaniel the Son of God.

What has this school wrought? What is its ministry? We are all familiar with its accomplishments in the city.

I shall not stop to speak of its police duty.

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The churches of this city do a hundredfold more to keep law and order in this city than all the courts and all the policemen.

I shall not speak of its intellectual power. Save the public school, there is no other force, or combination of forces, that does so much for the intellectual life of the people as the Christian church.

I shall not dwell upon its gifts and good works. The church is the mother of charity, and all the Christian associations, orphanages, and all movements for the betterment of the poor draw their sustenance from her.

But, primarily and chiefly, the church is neither a police force, a teacher of the mind, nor an almoner of charity. All these things she does, but they are not the chief things. All these she does because she does a far deeper and nobler service. Her chief business is inspiration. She changes the man's surroundings by changing the man. Who can measure the inspirational power of the church?

Often and often have we watched a great

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through assemble in a church. We have seen on all sides the signs of poverty and sorrow, of sordid, selfish, hateful living. We have wondered why such people ever come to church. The scoffer murmurs "Superstition," "Fear." But look now as the choir sings—wonder, wistfulness, worship is on every face. Miracles are wrought. We dwell on the Transfiguration mountain. Every face shines like a lighted candle of the Divine. Instead of scorn and sorrow and hatefulness, there is solicitude and calm and hope. Rough men weep for the first time in years. Sad-faced women forget to weep. The lonely walk as if they had met a friend. The animal in man slinks away. The Soul reigns. What is the mystery? It is this: In each one of these children of men there is a soul, and that soul, neglected, robbed, and left for dead, hears the cry of the Spiritual in the music, and awakes into a resurrection.

The organ is silent now. A man says, "Our Father," and all men bow, and most lips naturally, instinctively, sincerely say, "Our

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Father." The child, a long time lost or stolen, knows his Father; God has become a reality. Again the man reads from an old book, and there is nothing but silence, and some are sobbing. Memory is now at work, and many a man recalls his mother's sweet face and good-night kiss, and his childhood prayer. But more than memory is here. The words sound to the homesick soul like far-off and long-forgotten music. The soul knows its name. Intuition hath set windows in mysteries. The heavens are opened. Moses and Elias are come. And when at last the preacher opens his lips in inspiration, "here is a new bard of the Holy Ghost," and men at first hand are made aware of duty and Deity.

But life is not all lived in the great city. The foundations are underground. The country teacher, the country minister, and the country parent are they who have laid the foundations of American destiny. Our great men have come from the farm.

The other spring I saw a vision of supreme loveliness. I went across the hills to Harford

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to stand in the shade of one hundred years. The church there turned that corner-stone. It was a day in June, and that is perfection. The air was as rare as the breath of flowers; the sky was clear and blue, as deep as the sea; the road was over the hills, and all about grew clusters of wild roses, such as made the city rose-garden ashamed. Every now and then peeped out from the green grass the red-cheeked strawberries, as tempting to the lips as rosy-cheeked maid when the heart is young. Grand elms, one hundred years old or more, stood guard on every hill; in the valley the maples clustered, and their gnarled branches told the story of many a strife with the storms. There was a field of daisies, star-eyes, and walking there one could imagine that "he strolled amid the fields of the heavens, the stars seemed so thick and so close." And everywhere were golden buttercups, and humming bees, and singing birds; and the scent of clover was in the air. Surely it was a visit into the fields of Arden. And there was a richer beauty. We came to the village

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nestling amid the hills. There stood an old colonial house that made all other houses seem mean. One family had lived in it, from father to son, for one hundred years. During that time, from that family, there had always been a deacon in the little white church. The church stood on the hill, and all about it were the graves of the dead. Not far off was the white academy, only two years younger than the church. The historian told the story of the one hundred years. The soil was rocky, the hills rough; sometimes the ground was moistened with sweat and then with tears.

The life was hard. But the first house was the first church, and the first tax was to pay the first minister. They worked for bread and they lived for character. They showed us the picture of the old pastor, Adam Miller, who had served them for sixty years. They read his sermon. I heard his boys and girls, now old and gray, talk of him. I found out that from that little hamlet there had gone into the world one college president, one college professor, one governor, ten congressmen,

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and, besides these, many ministers, and lawyers, and doctors, and teachers. I learned that this town had not been without a boy at Amherst College, save for seven years, in seventy years, and yet this town had at no one time more than three hundred people. But when I heard the story of Adam Miller's long and obscure life, his poetic mind, and his deep-hearted sympathy, his love of books, and birds, and trees, and the story of his church, I knew the secret of Harford's life. I knew then why it was that this one mountain village had leavened large parts of our two commonwealths. It was the ministry of character.

It was the power of the church, which is the school for spiritual life. When I saw what the church did for one little hamlet, and thought of the thousands of little hamlets, and the church's ministry in them all, I despaired of putting into words all that the church was doing for our nation and our home. Only imagination can leap to such a distance and take in such horizons.

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No man can tell the work of the school-teacher in our nation's life. Horace Mann is only first among these master builders, most of whom live in neglect and die unsung.

Men have tried to tell what the American college hath wrought. They have mentioned William and Mary's, a little college, and when they remembered Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and fifty others, contemporaries, and all national statesmen, they have called the college "Mother of the Republic."

They have named Harvard and Yale, and when they remembered their children who have been our presidents, princes in letters, prophets of reform, preachers that controlled our destiny, they have stopped, awed as Columbus when he first saw a new world, or Cortez when he first looked on a lost civilization or Balboa when he gazed upon the Pacific.

Far less can men put into words what the church hath wrought for our welfare. From the church came Plymouth; from the church came our democracy; from the government

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of a church came our Federal Republic. From the school called the church, in Virginia, came Washington. From the school called the church, in New Hampshire, came Webster. From the school called the church Liberty came. Hear Lecky say, "Liberty came to Europe in a little boat with a man called Paul." From the school called the church came the home. Hear Dean Bradley say, "The church first gave, and then preserved, the Christian home." From the school called the church civilization has come. Hear Webster say, "The springs of American civilization have flowed in the wake of the Christian pulpit." From the school called the church comes our noblest character making. Hear Ruskin say, "Precious indeed those thirty minutes when the preacher seeks, by this way and that, to convict men of sin, convince them of righteousness, and persuade them of eternal life. Then he knocks at the hard fastenings of the human heart, where the Master himself hath often knocked, and no man opened unto him, calls down those

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darkened streets, where wisdom herself hath stretched forth her hand, and no man regarded. Thirty minutes in which to raise the dead!"

The church is the school of character. Save the home alone, it is the noblest institution of earth, maybe of the angels. Is it a little thing that its portals are open to you and your children? Can you evade your responsibility by neglecting your privilege? Is it strange that the young man, who is wise, remembers that Sunday is a Holy day, and entering the House of God, says "this is my home. Here I find rest, refreshment and tranquillity. I am stronger on Monday when I go to church on Sunday."

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